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Israeli peace group urges worldwide boycott of produce from settlements

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A left-wing Israeli peace group Tuesday called for a worldwide boycott of produce from Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

In a move unprecedented in Israel, Gush Shalom, or the Peace Bloc, urged consumers around the world to boycott produce from settlements in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights, which Israel occupied in 1967.

"The boycott of settlements' produce is a legitimate means for those who are for peace and justice to fight against the settlements," the organisation said in a statement. "The

investors will think twice before they risk boycott by a great part of the public."

A petition in support of the boycott has already been signed by several opposition politicians, including Labour MP Yael Dayan.

But the initiative provoked an angry reaction from the Israeli government and settler groups.

The Peace Bloc was playing the game of Israel's enemies who have been pushing for a U.N. boycott of settler products, a foreign ministry spokesman told public radio.

"Any boycott at this critical time would be in contra-

dition to the spirit of the peace process," said Effi Ben Maitiyanu.

A settler spokesman said the boycott call was "anti-Semitic." It was reminiscent of the measures the Nazis took against Jewish products in the 1930s, Yehudit Tayar said. But the boycott call was backed by Palestinian officials who said they hoped it would be heeded by the European Union.

"It's a commendable move. I hope the Israeli government has understood the message," said the Palestinian higher education minister, Hanan Ashrawi.

Israel exports around \$30

million worth of settler produce each year, mainly flowers, fruits and vegetables, and wines from the Golan Heights.

The call to boycott settler produce came as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu offered significant new funds for settlers to obtain the support of far-right parties for his embattled 1998 budget.

The opposition Labour Party claimed Mr. Netanyahu's concessions amounted to nearly \$600 million, but coalition officials said the promises amounted to less than \$300 million.

Orient House, the unoffi-

cial Palestine Liberation Organisation headquarters in Arab east Jerusalem, charged in a report issued Monday that Israel this year began new building in more than 50 settlements.

The settlement expansion drive involved confiscating more than 1,500 hectares of land from Palestinians, it said.

The Israeli government's policy is in defiance of U.S. demands for a freeze in settlement building pending the outcome of negotiations on a final share-out of territory in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip in a permanent peace agreement.



ISRAELI ALERT: An Israeli borderguard stands on alert in the Old City of Jerusalem Tuesday. Israeli security forces are on high alert in the first day of the fasting month of Ramadan fearing of a possible attack by Islamists (AFP photo)

Sudanese Islamist leader says he is ready to meet exiled adversaries

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudan's Islamist leader Hassan Abdullah Al Tourabi, speaker of the parliament backing Khartoum's junta, is willing to meet exiled foes, according to a reconciliation group spokesman.

An envoy from the body lobbying for reconciliation between the government and the opposition in exile said that Mr. Tourabi had announced that "I am ready to meet anybody, [including former premier] Sadeq Al Mahdi who is bound to me with intellectual and familial ties."

The envoy from Khar-

toum's Popular Organisation for National Dialogue (POND), Adil Sidahmed, told a press conference late Monday that Mr. Tourabi had made his statement earlier in the day when the two discussed a reconciliation initiative and the Islamist leader was asked whether he was prepared to meet Mr. Mahdi, his brother-in-law.

Mr. Mahdi was the Umma Party leader and prime minister ousted by a military coup which brought General Omar Al Bashir to power in 1989 and led to the banning of all political parties and trade unions.

Exiled political leaders, based mainly in Egypt and Eritrea, have formed an alliance with southern rebels who have fought successive Khartoum regimes to end Islamist domination of their animist and Christian part of Africa's largest nation.

At the news briefing with Mr. Sidahmed, who is envoy to Cairo for the POND, the group's chairman Hussein Suleiman Abu Salih said that the reconciliation bid had received a "great response" from opposition figures in Egypt. He declared that they were

ready to sit down with the government for talks on the POND initiative, which calls for the establishment of a broad transitional government under President Bashir, the abrogation of restrictive laws, and the release of political detainees.

The POND wants the government to relinquish confiscated opposition property and has asked the opposition to refrain from anti-government activities. The movement has sent envoys to meet exiled Sudanese leaders in Egypt and in Europe.

Turk rights group wants probe into killings

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's main human rights group on Tuesday called for an investigation into the killing of five villagers whom security officials had identified as Kurdish rebels. "We want legal and parliamentary investigations into the death of five Turkish citizens of Arab origin who were only villagers," Nazmi Gur, an official from the Human Rights Association, told Reuters.

Turkish security forces said troops killed the five on the southern border with Syria on Dec. 21 and that they were Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) rebels. But Mr. Gur said the five were suspected smugglers from the southern province of Sanliurfa, home to many ethnic Arabs.

"We have learned that some of them have criminal records for smuggling. They were known by local people there as villagers, not as PKK members," he said.

Smuggling is widespread in the border area. Turkey often accuses Syria of sponsoring the PKK and allowing rebels to cross the border. Syria denies the charges.

More than 27,000 people have died in the 13 years of conflict between troops and the PKK, fighting for self-rule in the southeast.

Egypt unsure about ties with Iran

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said Tuesday he was not yet comfortable with Iran's offer to normalise relations, so soon after it trumpeted a desire to export Islamist revolution.

Mr. Mubarak said Iranian President Mohammad Khatami's remarks are promising, but in order to restore normal relations, I want to be sure that this is not just a manoeuvre but a genuine normalisation of ties.

The Egyptian president told state television, "President Khatami may have good intentions, but I don't know what will happen afterwards."

"I want to be clear in my

own mind that the relations will not be exploited to recruit [terrorist] elements who make trouble," he said.

Egypt is on the offensive against Islamists seeking to overthrow the government and establish an Islamist state in Egypt.

President Khatami, speaking on the sidelines of an Islamic summit in Tehran this month, called for normalisation of relations with Egypt and the resolution of the two countries' differences.

"We have hardly emerged from a period in which [the Iranians] spoke of exporting the revolution and named [Tehran] streets after the assassins of [Egyptian President]

Anwar Al Sadat," Mr. Mubarak said.

"If I am sure that all that is in the past, then I'll want normal relations with every country, especially Islamic countries," he said.

Iran became an Islamic republic after the 1979 revolution in which the Shah was ousted.

The two countries broke off ties after the Shah was granted refuge in Egypt, and Cairo signed a peace treaty with Israel. Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa, who participated in the Organisation of the Islamic Conference summit in Tehran, said Dec. 12 that his talks with Iranian officials "could guarantee a better atmosphere for relations."

Iraq blasts U.S. over food distribution charges

(Continued from page 1)

But while the oil exports have gone on smoothly, food and medicine have not been reaching the country in time.

"The mechanism of the approval of contracts, letters of credit and delivery of supplies is so complicated that it takes four months until goods can reach Iraq," Mr. Saleh said.

He blamed the delay in arrival of food and medical supplies on the United States and Britain.

Under the deal, Iraq is allowed oil exports worth \$2 billion over six months. The pact was renewed for the third time earlier this month, but Baghdad said it would not export a drop of oil until U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan approved an aid distribution plan.

U.N. spokesman Fred Eckhard said on Monday in New York that Mr. Annan was expected to approve the plan by the end of the week.

Mr. Saleh charged that "America takes the money [from the oil deal] and pays it

Pope trying to get U.N. embargo against Iraq lifted, INA reports

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Pope John Paul II is trying to get the U.N. embargo against Iraq lifted, the apostolic nuncio here told an Iraqi official Tuesday, according to the official Iraqi news agency INA.

"The holy father supports the Iraqi people and is working continuously for the lifting of the embargo... the cause of the deaths of children, women and the elderly," INA quoted the Pope's representative as saying.

He was speaking during a meeting with the chief of the Iraqi parliament's Arab and international affairs committee, Saad Qassem Hamudi, who gave the Vatican diplomat a Christmas message for the Pope from humanitarian groups.

The Iraqi parliament asked Pope John Paul II on Christmas to "redouble his efforts to bring an end to the suffering of

the Iraqi people and to lift the unjust embargo imposed on 22 million Iraqis," INA said.

"The embargo has killed more than a million innocent people, mainly children," it said.

The Pope has condemned the U.N. embargo imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, saying sanctions generally hit the poor hardest in any given country.

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein sent the pontiff a letter at the end of November thanking him for his interest in seeing the suffering of the Iraqi people alleviated.

The U.N. Security Council will not lift the embargo until arms inspectors have certified that Baghdad has eliminated its weapons of mass destruction.

to the [U.N.] Special Commission [UNSCOM] in order to spy on Iraq."

UNSCOM, in charge of dismantling Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, is locked in a standoff with Baghdad over

inspection of so-called "presidential sites" which Iraq says are off-limits to U.N. inspectors.

Mr. Saleh urged Washington to release "more than \$2 billion Iraqi assets frozen in

American banks to allow Iraq to buy food, medicines and other essentials" from the U.S. Iraq's assets abroad, mostly in U.S. and European banks, were impounded after it invaded Kuwait.

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel

will be able to deploy an anti-missile laser system capable of shooting down Katyusha rockets fired from Lebanon in early 1999, the Haaretz newspaper reported Tuesday.

The newspaper quoted officials at the Rafael Weapons Development Laboratories in Israel saying that field tests of the Nautilus laser would be conducted toward the end of next year. Nautilus is a Tactical High

Energy Laser being jointly developed by Israel and the United States.

Its main function will be to protect against the short-range Katyusha rockets fired into Israel by guerrillas in south Lebanon.

The last major Katyusha attack was in August when the main Shiite guerrilla group in Lebanon, Hizbullah, fired around 45 of the rockets into northern Israel. The attack caused no casualties.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:10Jonny Quest
14:30Art Box
16:00Border Town
16:30Neighbours
17:00French Programmes
19:00Le Journal
19:15French Programmes
19:30News Headlines
19:35Doc.: "Yanni — No Borders, No Boundaries"
20:25 Film — Dr. Zhivago (Pt. I)
22:00News in English
22:30 Film — Dr. Zhivago (Pt. II)
23:59 Country Music — Garth Brooks in Concert

PRAYER TIMES

05:08Fajr
06:31(Sunrise)Dhuha
11:38Dhuhr
14:23Asr
16:46Maghreb
18:09Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifiah, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 634590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

661757.

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622266
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 5516245.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 688404.
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.
Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295.
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Skies will be partly cloudy during the day, becoming cool at night. Winds will be north-westerly moderate. In Aqaba winds will be northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Amman05/12
Aqaba04/14
Deserts10/19
Jordan Valley10/19

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192 621111.

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, 644281/6
Aklieh Maternity, 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 13, Aqaba 21 Humidity readings: Amman 43 per cent, Aqaba 31 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Mukhlis Halaseh5510220
Dr. Rabi Sukkar856457
Dr. Fadi Al Khatib864546
Dr. Yousef Al Faqih890104
Firas pharmacy661912
Ferdows pharmacy890280
Al Asama pharmacy637055
Al Salam pharmacy636730
Yacoub pharmacy644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Nairoukh pharmacy623672
Najib pharmacy847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ghazi Ta'ameh250080
Al Quds pharmacy—
ZARQA:
Dr. Issa Al Omari988932
Khalifeh pharmacy985417

AMMAN:

637777
Fire Brigade617101
Blood Bank775121
Highway Police843402
Traffic Police896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints605800
Price Complaints661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints897467
Amman Municipality Complaints787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television773111
Radio Jordan774111
Water Authority680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636281
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

AMMAN:

642362
Malhas, J. Amman636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 672279
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali664164
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 77101/3
Al-Bashir775111/26
Army, Marka891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)940990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111
FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:15 Larnaca, Damascus (RJ)
08:35Jeddah (RJ)
08:50 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
15:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:35Frankfurt (RJ)
16:50Istanbul (RJ)
17:05Paris (RJ)
17:40Brussels, Geneva (RJ)
17:45Madrid, Vienna (RJ)
18:10London, Berlin (RJ)
18:10Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
18:30Kuala Lumpur, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
23:10Beirut (RJ)
24:05Cairo (RJ)

DEPARTURES

08:45 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
09:45Rome (RJ)
10:40Berlin, London (RJ)
11:00Istanbul (RJ)
17:30Colombo (RJ)
19:35Beirut (RJ)
20:05Riyadh (RJ)
20:10Cairo (RJ)
20:15Bombay (RJ)
20:30Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
21:00 Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
21:15Dubai, Muscat (RJ)

Other Flights

05:50Bucharest (RJ)
09:30Cairo (MS)
09:30Al 'Arish (Marka Airport) (PF)
10:15 Doha, Al Hudaydah (FY)
10:30Jeddah (SV)
10:50Kuwait (KU)

ARRIVALS

13:10Tunis (TU)
13:25 Doha, Abu Dhabi (GF)
13:50Tel Aviv (LY)
15:05Vienna (OS)
15:30Algiers (AH)
16:05 Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK)
20:10Beirut (ME)
21:10Paris, Damascus (AF)
22:30Athens (OA)
23:15London (BA)
23:30London, Beirut (BA)
23:35Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES

07:45Aqaba (RW)
09:05 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
09:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:20Tel Aviv (RW)
18:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:20Aqaba (RW)
22:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)

Other Flights

06:45 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
08:15Aqaba (RW)
09:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
16:45Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:55Tel Aviv (RW)
20:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:50Aqaba (RW)

Other Flights

22:45Sanaa (RI)
24:00Jeddah (RI)
02:00Dhahran (RI)

Other Flights

00:35Amsterdam (KL)
01:55Bucharest (RO)
06:35Larnaca (CY)
08:00Beirut (ME)
08:25London (BA)
10:30Cairo (MS)
10:30Al 'Arish (Marka Airport) (PF)
11:15 Al Hudaydah, Aden (FY)
12:00Kuwait (KU)
12:00Jeddah (SV)
14:10Tunis (TU)
14:20Shariqah (AH)
15:15Bahrain, Muscat (GF)
15:10Tel Aviv (LY)
15:30Doha (QR)
15:50Vienna (OS)
19:30 Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PK)
23:55Damascus, Paris (AF)

Other Flights

06:45 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
08:15Aqaba (RW)
09:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
16:45Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:55Tel Aviv (RW)
20:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:50Aqaba (RW)

Minister briefs Cabinet on Jordan-Iraq oil talks

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Mohammad Saleh Horani Tuesday briefed the Council of Ministers on the outcome of his talks with Iraqi officials, which ended with the conclusion of a Jordanian-Iraqi oil deal for 1998.

The agreement provides for Iraq to supply Jordan with 4.8 million tonnes of crude oil and oil products, which will amount to \$550 million at international market prices, he said.

According to the deal, Jordan will receive a 50 per cent discount on the oil purchases, with the rest to be paid for in goods to be exported to Iraqi markets, the minister said.

The Iraqis have agreed to sell oil to Jordan at the rate of \$16.87 per barrel in 1998, down from the 1997 price of \$19.50 per barrel, he said.

Dr. Horani told the Cabinet that his discussions with his Iraqi counterpart, Amer Mohammad Rashid, covered the prospects of laying an oil pipeline from the Iraqi oil fields to the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company at Zarqa and cooperation between the Jordan National Oil Company and the Iraqi oil authorities to prospect for oil in Iraq. The pipeline, he said, would replace a fleet of more than 400 oil tanker trucks that currently bring Iraqi crude to Jordan, costing the country \$50 million in

transport fees.

The two sides also reached agreement on establishing a joint oil services company and building a refinery in Aqaba.

The Cabinet, which met in a regular session under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, consented to Jordan's participation in a meeting by the refugees working group of the Middle East peace process, which is due to convene in Rome to discuss the general health condition of the refugees.

It also authorised the director general of the Budget Department to sign a grant agreement with Switzerland totalling JD4.5 million,

approved of an agreement with Qatar on preventing dual taxation, and authorised Jordan's ambassador to Yemen to sign documents of ratification for two agreements on training manpower and cooperation in religious guidance matters.

The Cabinet formed Jordan's delegation to a meeting by the Arab ministers of tourism council, which will be held in Cairo on Jan. 14 to discuss inter-Arab tourism.

The Cabinet added the name of HRH Prince Firas, His Majesty King Hussein's health secretary, to the list of members of the board in charge of the national council for the care of the handicapped.

Social Security Corporation releases 1997 figures

AMMAN (Petra) — The total investments of the Social Security Corporation (SSC) increased to JD996 million in 1997, up from JD865 million in 1996, SSC Director General Safwan Touqan said Tuesday.

In an interview with the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Dr. Touqan said the SSC realised a JD80 million profit in 1997, compared to JD62.7 million in 1996, an increase of 27.6 per cent.

Dr. Touqan said the number of beneficiaries increased to 307,000 in 1997, a 4 per cent increase over the 1996 figure. The number of institutions covered by the SSC increased to 12,100, up from 11,100.

An additional 4,500 sub-

scribers who reached the retirement age benefited from SSC pensionable salaries, in addition to 11,000 who received a lump sum compensation. The SSC also provided medical care to almost 10,500 students who sustained labour injuries in 1997.

The SSC spent JD8.5 million to cover the lump sum payments to beneficiaries in 1997, compared to JD6.5 million in 1996. The corporation also spent JD2 million on medical care and daily wages for subscribers sustaining labour injuries.

The insurance expenses for 1997 totalled JD49 million, including more than JD38 million for pensionable

salaries, compared to JD33 million in 1996.

On SSC investments in various economic sectors, Dr. Touqan said JD175 million was invested in 108 companies as of the end of 1997, up from JD147 million in 1996. Net profits from investments amounted to JD4.5 million in 1997, compared to JD3.5 million last year.

The corporation is expected to invest approximately JD68 million in various projects with the aim of upgrading their performance and increasing their efficiency, he said.

The net balance of bonds and debentures for this year amounted to JD258, compared to JD219 million in

1996, he said, adding that the SSC has participated in loans sponsored by a consortium of banks to benefit some companies. The corporation has also invested a total of JD34 million in government bonds, he stated.

On the corporation's investments in local banks, Dr. Touqan said they increased to JD508 million, up from JD446 million in 1996. The corporation achieved a profit of JD46.5 million on its investments in banks in 1997.

SSC investments in the real estate sector amounted to JD55.5 million, he said. The market value of the investments in the real estate sector is approximately JD32 million.

Second-hand clothing increases its appeal

By Ahmad Khatib
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — There was a time when Italian Street in downtown Amman, the country's burgeoning used clothes centre of European and American fashions, was a magnet for Jordan's impoverished shoppers.

But nowadays, it is attracting middle and upper-income Jordanians seeking quality garments and designer labels found buried beneath heaps of clothes on their racks.

In a country where most workers earn less than JD100 a month — and around 30 per cent of the four million population lives below poverty line — second-hand clothes, locally known as "balleh (old)", are a blessing in disguise.

"Someone with half a dozen children cannot buy shoes for 20 dinars each," said Salam Massed, standing behind racks of shoes in his father's shop. "Salaries have not kept up. People were better off in the early 1980s," he explained.

"Sometimes wealthy people with fancy cars come to my shop asking for high-quality used clothes," said balleh vendor Khaled Yahia, 32. "They tell me, we want them for our servants, but they spend so much time digging for the right pieces that I wonder why they are so concerned," he added.

"I only got to see the true picture one day when I saw one of my 'rich' customers wearing the dress she said she had bought for her maid Mimi."

A jacket with "Midgits Golf" written across the back, last used in the Netherlands,

sold for JD2. In a neighbouring shop, shirts could range from half that price to JD5, depending on the customer's skills in bargaining.

For the less down-trodden, those who control the business, it has become a profitable industry.

Officials say the average price paid by the customer is five times that paid by the importer.

Second-hand clothing imports soared from 4,500 tonnes in 1987 to over 9,000 tonnes in 1995 and the trend seems likely to continue.

Jordan's own clothing manufacturers are complaining of unfair competition from the balleh and from stores mushrooming in the more affluent areas of Amman selling new goods from clearance outlets in America and Europe.

Trendy teenagers and adults alike are flocking to shops selling Western factory rejects and products from clearance outlets at reasonable prices in Sweifiyeh, Jabal Hussein, Mecca Street, and other areas. Local manufacturers say they cannot compete with clearance products that were originally priced for the clearing shelves in the West while satisfying the needs of the sophisticated consumer who wants the latest in fashion without wanting to wait for end-of-season sales.

According to a recent Ministry of Planning study by Surayya Salti, the country's "textile and garment industries can hardly be viewed as significant, which would be important for competing in the low end of the market."

Around 200 of the 384 textile manufacturing enterprises in Jordan employ less than four workers each, with total

employment in textile manufacturing at 3,700, she said.

In 1995, total production exceeded \$120 million, 13.6 per cent of the total manufacturing output for that year. Exports accounted for 23 per cent of sales.

Traders say the used clothes market is getting indirect protection, since raw materials abroad are relatively cheaper and so are custom tariffs and storage charges.

In addition, many balleh vendors do not have to pay rent and other running costs "for their shops because they display goods on street pavements."

"I think people like to buy second-hand clothes, not only because they are cheap and suit their incomes, but because they are good quality products, unlike most Jordanian-made clothes, which are expensive for nothing," said mini-market manager Hikmat Humadi, 30.

"I believe that if the local clothing industry improved its quality and prices, then it could compete equally with the balleh and the clearance outlets," he told the Jordan Times.

"Some of my customers own the most well-known boutiques in Amman," said balleh merchant Mohamad Najj.

"Some of the best quality merchandise is taken from here and put on their shelves."

The second-hand clothes are bought in Europe in bulk at around JD8,000 a tonne. Customs agents make spot checks, but generally accept the quality grading listed by the exporter and charge a small import duty.

Importers, whose number grew from 80 in 1988 to 234

in 1993, retail some themselves, but also supply over 900 registered second-hand shops. Again, the goods are usually sold in bulk, traders said.

Most imports are men's outerwear, followed by women's outerwear, baby clothing, children's wear, and other items such as blankets and curtains.

The rest is underwear, such as the rows of used brassieres hanging from chrome display stands filling the shops of Italian Street.

An estimated 10 per cent of the imports are sold on the street, the clothing shop for those on the bottom rung of Jordanian society.

However, small-size balleh merchants say business is not too brisk.

"Contrary to popular perceptions, things are not quite okay with us... we are suffering from lack of organisation and from the market's 'whales', who force us to take more than we need," said 27-year-old Mansour Nayef.

"The government must intervene to stop this blackmail. And the local industry must be supported by the government, producers, and consumers."

Analysts have said if most local clothes manufacturers adjust their structure to earn the consumers' trust by improving quality and competitiveness, then the used clothes will become mainly a market for the very low income, as it was originally intended. This would increase the market share of the textile industry.

Otherwise, used clothes that are good and cheap will drive out new clothes that are low in quality and high in price.

Minister to meet with gas distributor representatives in effort to avert strike

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Mohammad Saleh Horani Tuesday said he will meet with representatives of petrol stations and gas cylinder distributors today in an attempt to convince them not to go on strike Thursday.

Dr. Horani, who was speaking following a regular Cabinet session, told reporters that the ministry will "look into their demands in a very objective manner that will be fair to them and the government."

"We will meet with their leaders and deal with them positively," said the minis-

ter, who returned to Amman Monday after a several-day official visit to Iraq.

Dr. Horani refused to disclose what "offers" will be submitted to the distributors at their meeting, saying that "they will submit something and we will submit something, and both parties will discuss these demands."

The row erupted following the distributors' demands that the commission they receive on sales from the Jordan Petroleum Refinery (JPR) be raised.

The owners of 250 petrol stations and 900 gas cylinder distributors have announced plans to start an open strike Thursday if their demands are not met

by the government.

The current commission system, which has been in force since 1963, stipulates that gas cylinder distributors receive 18 per cent, currently 350 fils, from the total price of each gas cylinder, and 1 per cent from the total cost of each litre of oil, diesel, and kerosene.

Mohammad Qaisi, chairperson of the Petrol Stations and Gas Cylinder Distributors Association, said they will not drop their demand to raise the commission.

But Mr. Qaisi hinted that the timing of the strike is "negotiable."

"The timing of the strike is not our goal," Mr. Qaisi told the Jordan Times. "But the government should

understand that we have reached a point where we either stop buying oil and gas from the JPR or continue incurring more and more losses."

Mr. Qaisi said the association is against any hike in the total price of gas and oil in the country "because this will affect the majority of the citizens."

"What we are asking for is simply that our commission be increased so we will be able to meet our minimum costs," added Mr. Qaisi.

He said one of their demands is to reduce the prevailing cost of each gas cylinder, which they buy from the JPR at JD1.650, to JD1.300 or JD1.350.

American humanitarian group reports worsening health conditions in Iraq

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A U.S. humanitarian aid group that recently returned from Iraq Tuesday said public health conditions in Iraq are deteriorating and warned that the death rate among children is steadily rising.

Mira Tanna, a spokesperson for the Chicago-based Voices in the Wilderness, said recent figures indicate that more than 600,000 Iraqi children, mostly under five years of age, have died as a result of the U.S.-spearheaded sanctions, which have been in place since Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Ms. Tanna was part of five-member delegation that arrived in Amman following a 10-day visit during which they donated \$40,000 worth of medicine to several Iraqi hospitals in the Baghdad, Basra, and Emeirah governorates in southern Iraq.

The visit is the ninth by the group, which collects

donations from churches and humanitarian groups in the United States for Iraqi children.

"We saw children dying, mostly because of chronic malnutrition. We met doctors who told us that they are unable to treat their patients because of lack of necessary medicine and needed equipment," said Ms. Tanna, from St. Louis, Missouri.

"The rate of leukaemia among children is skyrocketing," she said. "In the past few years, the rate was 10 to 20 cases per month, but now doctors say the rate has increased to 20 to 30 case a week."

The group said incubators lie useless for lack of spare parts. Operating rooms are closed for lack of anaesthesia. Doctors are forced to decide who gets medicine from inadequate supplies.

"We saw so many parents weeping over their children. They were dying from treatable forms of illness, but there is no medicine," said a statement by the

group. "We spoke with many highly trained physicians who could not heal their patients for lack of medicine and equipment," added the one-page statement.

"We were shocked by what we saw. It was a devastating picture," said Ms. Tanna.

"Some of the American people are not aware of the suffering of the Iraqi people, others believe that it is Saddam Hussein to blame for this situation," said Ms. Tanna.

"They hear about Saddam Hussein but they know nothing about the suffering of the ordinary Iraqis," she added.

"During our visits to several Iraqi hospitals, we saw that Iraqis know that the American people are not responsible for their suffering but rather the American government is to be blamed," added Ms. Tanna.

She said the oil-for-food agreement, a U.N.-brokered agreement under which Baghdad is allowed

to sell \$2 billion of oil in return for humanitarian purchases, is not enough to meet the need of the 22 million citizens.

Non-governmental organisations and U.N. agencies have testified that medical and humanitarian supplies purchased under this agreement were "allocated fairly among Iraqis and went to whom they were intended to go," she stated.

The U.S. citizen said the group's trip to Iraq was against the laws of the U.S., which prohibit American citizens from travelling to the country or donating aid.

She added that the previous team made films and videos documenting the deteriorating health conditions in Iraq. However, U.S. customs agents confiscated them upon their return from Baghdad last month.

"The objectives of our group will be completed when the sanctions are lifted," Ms. Tanna concluded.

Refugee host nations agree to hold meeting examining Israeli occupation measures

AMMAN (J.T.) — A meeting by Arab countries hosting Palestinian refugees recently ended in Cairo with a unanimous decision to convene an international symposium to expose Israel's arbitrary measures against the Palestinians in the occupied territories. Ibrahim Tarshih, Jordan's representative to the meeting, said Tuesday.

Speaking upon his return from the meeting, held at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo, Mr. Tarshih stated that at the proposed meeting the Arab delegates will seek an international condemnation of Israel's Jewish settlement programmes in Jabal Abu Ghneim, which are being carried out in defiance of a U.N. General Assembly resolution.

The symposium, to be

organised in cooperation with European and international non-governmental organisations, also seeks to secure the world community's rejection of Israel's drive to Judaize Jerusalem and obliterate the Christian and Islamic character of the city, he said.

On the recently-concluded meeting, Mr. Tarshih said delegates representing Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, and Palestine, in addition to the Arab League and the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), condemned Israel's on-going excavations under the Al Aqsa Mosque, Islam's third holiest shrine.

According to Mr. Tarshih, the delegates' one-week agenda covered Israel's policies in the Palestinian lands, the situ-

ation in the city of Jerusalem, Israel's plans to Judaize the city by building surrounding settlements, and a report by the Jordanian delegation describing in detail Israeli occupation measures, which he said have adversely affected the Palestinian people's economic and social life.

Referring to the issue of Palestinian refugees, he said the delegates called for considering 1998 a year for disseminating information about the Palestine refugee problem and conducting a worldwide media campaign focusing on their rights. He added that next year marks the 50th anniversary of Israel's occupation of Palestine in 1948, which created the refugee problem.

Referring to the United

Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), Mr. Tarshih said the Arab delegates urged UNRWA Commissioner General Peter Hansen to respond favourably to the agency's staff and ensure their legitimate rights.

Representatives of agency workers earlier sent Mr. Hansen a memorandum containing their demands for better pay and other benefits after staging a brief sit-in. However, Mr. Hansen said the agency's recurrent budget deficits cannot allow him to meet the demands.

UNRWA estimates a deficit of \$50 million in the \$343 million 1998 fiscal budget.

Mr. Tarshih said the delegates agreed to hold their next meeting in June 1998 at the Arab League's headquarters in Cairo.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- * Display of Bani Hamida handicrafts (rugs, cushions, and wall hangings) at Bani Hamida House, Jabal Amman (Tel. 65869677), until Jan. 5.
- * "Modern Bulgarian Art" at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598), until Jan. 5.
- * Works by about a hundred artists from Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Lebanon and Jordan at Hammurabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street, until Feb. 20 (Tel. 5536098).
- * Exhibition of prints by Algerian artist Rashid Koraishi and calligraphy by Iraqi artist Hassan Massoudi, inspired by the poems of Mahmoud Darwish, at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until Dec. 31. Also displaying paintings by Jordanian artist Nasr Abdul Aziz, and works by contemporary Arab artists.

RJ restructuring does not necessarily entail layoffs — president

AMMAN (J.T.) — A government plan to restructure Royal Jordanian (RJ), the national air carrier, does not necessarily entail lay-offs or terminating jobs, RJ President and Chief Executive Officer Nader Dahabi announced Tuesday.

In a message circulated to all RJ employees, he said the restructuring plan aims at rehabilitating and training the airline's staff and redistributing them in departments to maximise productivity and increase salaries and incentives.

His statement followed a meeting last Sunday by RJ sales and marketing offices in the Gulf, Middle East, and North Africa regions. The meeting reviewed

plans to gradually privatise RJ by turning it into a company operating on a commercial basis, after the legal and financial restructuring programme has been implemented.

The Council of Ministers last September approved plans for a major restructuring of the airline, an important step for selling stakes to global strategic investors.

In his message marking the end of 1997, Mr. Dahabi expressed appreciation for the efforts of all the airline's workers and urged them to double their endeavours and work to further promote the airline's services and image. The RJ staff have been dedicated and diligent in their work,

something which is bound to help the airline overcome any difficulties, Mr. Dahabi added.

The government, realising the difficulties the national airline has been facing, has pledged all possible assistance, he said.

According to RJ sources, the World Bank is advising the government on how to restructure the airline and set terms of reference for the project.

According to RJ Vice President for Commercial Affairs Majdi Sabri, the air-

line carried a total of 1.38 million passengers between January and October, as well as a total of 71,000 tonnes of cargo during

1997. RJ is scheduled to hold its annual conference for regional managers in May 1998.

Condolences

The Editor and Staff of the Jordan Times deeply regret the passing of

Yasmine Khouri Shofani

sister of their colleague and friend Rami Khouri.

May her soul rest in peace and may her family and friends be comforted by her memory.

The Church Council of the Jordan Chaplaincy in Amman announces with deep regret the sudden death in Aqaba of REVEREND DERRICK HEARNE on Monday 29 December, 1997. Details of a Memorial Service will be announced later.

Tempers flare as Kenyan election limps on

NAIROBI (AFP) — Tempers flared Tuesday in Kenya's chaotic presidential and general elections amid reports of bloodshed and charges of fraud as voting resumed in some districts and counting started in others.

President Daniel Arap Moi, 73, is running for a final five-year term against 12 challengers, while 883 candidates are contesting the 210 seats in parliament on behalf of 23 parties.

Six people died in election-related violence in one constituency in western Kenya Monday and Tuesday, the official Kenyan News Agency reported Tuesday.

Police collected the bodies of five people believed to have died during a confrontation between ruling party and opposition supporters in Alego-Usonga electoral district Monday, it said, and a man was killed during another clash in the same constituency early Tuesday.

The elections for a presi-

dent, parliament, and local councils should have finished at 6:00 p.m. (1500 GMT) Monday.

The electoral commission finally decided that those polling stations which opened late or not at all would be able to make up the lost time Tuesday, with a deadline once again of 6:00 p.m.

It blamed Monday's delays on severe weather in many parts of the country (hundreds of polling agents were blocked by floods caused by more than two months of torrential rain) and on "logistical problems."

But opposition spokesmen charged that the ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU) was using the delays to manipulate the voting.

Democratic Party leader Mwai Kibaki told a press conference that "the election commission has been infiltrated and manipulated by government officials bent on rigging the polls."

But KANU candidates complained as loudly as those of the opposition, saying many of the ruling party's own strongholds were affected.

All united Tuesday in accusing the electoral commission of incompetence.

It was enlarged from 11 to 21 members — with 10 opposition members added to those assumed to be KANU supporters — after constitutional reforms in November.

Its chairman, Samuel Kivuitu, is a lawyer who was a member of parliament from 1969 to 1974 when Kenya was a de facto one-party state.

Ballot boxes were sent to the wrong constituencies, and many polling stations received far too few voting papers, or none at all.

Delays continued Tuesday, with some polling stations still waiting for materials late morning. Voting was meant to continue at about a quarter of the more than 12,000 polling booths, the com-

mission said.

"It's all deliberate," one opposition candidate maintained in a Nairobi counting centre, where he was keeping a close eye on the ballot boxes, guarded by police.

Ballot boxes from stations which completed voting were kept at counting centres overnight under the guard of police accompanied by party agents, observers, and hundreds of ordinary voters determined not to allow any interference.

When counting started late morning at one centre in Nairobi, agents engaged in furious arguments with officials who disallowed votes — because the "X" scrawled by a voter who was probably illiterate had exceeded the limits of the square — or because a presidential ballot had been put in the parliamentary box.

At another, counting was suspended after similar arguments, and tension was high on the street outside,

where a crowd gathered as police stood guard.

Some people who were unable to vote Monday turned up at their polling stations again Tuesday to discover that voting there had been adjudged completed.

Newspapers meanwhile reported that presidential candidate Charity Ngilu (Social Democratic Party) uncovered "thousands of hidden blank ballot papers, electoral cards and other documents," some of them half-burnt, in the electoral commission office in her eastern Kisumu constituency.

She took them to the electoral commission headquarters after a two-hour stand-off with the police on the way, in which she dared them to shoot her, the Daily Nation reported.

The East African Standard reported three boxes stuffed with ballot papers discovered at Nakuru, in the Rift Valley, before voting began Monday.

Ozawa launches new Japanese party

TOKYO (AFP) — Senior Japanese conservative politician Ichiro Ozawa announced Tuesday the launch of a new opposition party, the first of six new political groupings likely to be formed here in the coming months.

Mr. Ozawa's dissolving New Frontier Party (NFP), the second largest force in parliament after Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), will split into six groups next year, officials said.

His new party will be named the Liberal Party, aides said, as critics panned the other proposed parties for their obscure names.

"The Liberal Party will be formally launched Jan. 1, with 70 to 80 members," an aide of Mr. Ozawa's said.

News reports said the number may be lower at around 50, making the group second opposition party after the Democratic Party led by high-profile former Health and Welfare Minister Naoto Kan.

"We will make utmost efforts as a fighting policy group for the sake of people," 55-year-old Ozawa

said at a news conference in Tokyo hotel.

Tuesday's announcement followed the previous day's news conference on basic party policies featuring "reform without taboos."

Mr. Ozawa Monday proposed halving income and residential taxes, "active" participation in U.N. peace-keeping operations and enhancing security ties with the United States.

Following a rush of new parties founded in the wake of the NFP break-up, Japan's leading business daily carried a critical editorial Tuesday under the title "Can you say all the party names?"

"People have extremely low interest in the political battle like the reshuffling of classes at a junior high school," the Nihon Keizai said.

"Too many new parties to remember are being created again. Let us give advice that political parties with ambiguous names or those only crowned with the word 'New' will never succeed," it said.

The three-year-old NFP is to break up formally Wednesday.

The five parties to be created other than Mr. Ozawa's are:

— A group called "Frontier Net," comprising members loyal to former Health and Welfare Minister Taisuke Ozawa, who is not related to Ichiro Ozawa.

— "Kokumin no Koe (Voice of People)" led by Michihiro Kano, who was defeated by Ichiro Ozawa in the NFP presidential election of Dec. 18.

— "Reimei no Kai (Group of Dawn)" with upper house members with ties to the former Clean Government Party, or Komeito.

— "Shinto Heiwa (New Party Peace)" with members allied to the former Komeito with backing from powerful Buddhist group Soka Gakkai.

— "Shinto Yuzi (New Party Friendship)" grouping members from the former Democratic Socialist Party, or Minshato.

In addition, former prime ministers Morihiro Hosokawa and Tsutomu Hata, who defected from the NFP earlier, have set up groups called "From Five," and "Sun Party," respectively.

The NFP had 126 seats against the LDP's 254 in the 500-seat House of Representatives, the Lower House of Parliament. Its strength in the 252-seat House of Councillors was 56 against the LDP's 117.

Five members from the NFP will reportedly join the LDP Wednesday.

Mr. Ozawa, a protégé of the late Shin Kanemaru, a legendary LDP kingmaker, quit the scandal-hit LDP in 1993 to end the party's 38-year single-party rule. He formed the NFP in December 1994 with key members of an anti-LDP alliance.

He helped set up a wide alliance which ruled Japan for a year until the LDP returned to power in mid-1994 with the help of the Social Democratic Party and the centrist party Sakigake.

Mr. Ozawa remained a backroom figure until December 1995 when NFP infighting forced him to take over the leadership.

Under Mr. Ozawa's two-year leadership, however, the NFP lost more than 40 members through defections.

Chinese dissident urges gradual introduction of freedoms

BEIJING (AFP) — Veteran dissident Xu Shuliang has issued an open letter urging Chinese President Jiang Zemin to gradually introduce political reforms alongside the country's measures to scrap its socialist economy.

"Economic reform cannot fall too far behind political reform, and cannot lead too far ahead of political reform," a copy of the letter faxed to AFP Tuesday said.

"The first step of political reform is to give people freedom. To maintain stability, we can undertake this step-by-step," the Nanjing-based dissident said.

Beijing should first allow freedom of speech, then loosen controls on the press and people's ability to organise — eventually allowing the formation of political parties at the appropriate time, Mr. Xu said.

He described this first step as the "most difficult," as a small minority of "authoritarianists" could seek to violently crush opposition to Communist Party rule in the manner of the June 4, 1989 massacre that ended the Tiananmen Square pro-democracy demonstrations.

But at this stage, any such attempt to use force would backfire, as the massacre turned people against the party, he said.

"We hope that we can step onto a peaceful way of gradual change, but the current situation cannot be changed by our will alone," Mr. Xu said.

To preserve stability, the dissident called for economic reforms to be put on hold while political changes are introduced.

"During the first step in the political reform, at least in the first few years, we can't carry out wide-ranging economic reforms," he said.

A prominent thinker of the 1978-79 Democracy Wall movement, Mr. Xu was jailed from 1981-1991 for "counter-revolutionary activities."

Emboldened by the late-November release of China's most prominent political prisoner, Wei Jingsheng, the country's small remaining band of dissidents at large have recently stepped up calls for change.



An old woman is assisted to cast her vote by an election official within a rural area Central Province. Opposition parties accuse the electoral commission's decision to extend the voting for an additional 24 hours as a masked effort to manipulate results. (Reuters photo)

Sam Rainsy asks Thailand to shelter Cambodian deserters

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Leading Cambodian opposition figure Sam Rainsy has called on Thailand and the United Nations to protect deserters from either side of Cambodia's bloody civil war as a way of finishing the fighting.

Mr. Rainsy said in a statement from France that most soldiers did not want to fight and would be happy to leave their posts if they could seek asylum in Thailand.

"Top officers on both sides who receive orders to fight from their respective political leaders acknowledge the desire of their soldiers to stop fighting," he said.

"I appeal to the government of the Kingdom of Thailand and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to grant temporary shelter, protection and assistance whenever required to defecting soldiers from all sides who refuse to continue the war."

Mr. Rainsy also called on soldiers to "lay down their weapons, to leave their units and to return home whenever possible."

Mr. Rainsy's call comes a week after his failed attempt to broker a ceasefire between generals loyal to ousted First Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh and those commanding government forces under Second Prime Minister Hun Sen.

Mr. Rainsy said he had brokered an in-principle agreement between the warring factions to cease hostilities in the lead up to next year's planned general election.

But in his statement received Tuesday he said he was "disappointed but not discouraged" by Hun Sen's "negative response."

"I want to tell Mr. Hun Sen that I cannot follow his arguments for refusing an honourable ceasefire acceptable by all the concerned parties," Mr. Rainsy said.

"In the present situation it is a criminal act to send countless young and innocent people to die on the battlefields, whether it be O'Smach, Thmor Samlot."

Cambodia's latest civil war erupted in July when Hun Sen ordered his troops to the streets of Phnom Penh and chased the royalist forces out of the capital.

Since then, most of the fighting has been around what is believed to be the royalists' last bastion at the small town of O'Smach, on the border with northeast Thailand.

But reports Tuesday of sporadic firefights flared up in the government stronghold of Battambang and Pailin.

About 1500 refugees fled into Thailand near the border town of Aranyaprathet Monday after fresh fighting started along Route 6 in Pailin.

The Cambodia Daily reported fighting had started again around Pailin and Sen Chao village in the Samlot district. Battambang, with government troops taking it to malarial and bandit attacks they tried to cut off the supply lines Thailand.

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Australian government falls behind in polls

SYDNEY (AFP) — Australia's Labour opposition has increased its lead over the 21-month old conservative government as they enter what is expected to be an election year, a poll published here Tuesday showed.

After a year dogged by scandal, ministerial resignations and backflips, Prime Minister John Howard's approval rating across the country has also slipped sharply behind opposition leader Kim Beazley.

An analysis by the Australian Newsweek of nationwide surveys involving more than 8,000 voters over the past three months found support for Labour had risen in all mainland states.

The paper said a slump linked to the defection of popular Australian Democrats leader Cheryl Kernot to Labour in October has deepened despite recent hints that its public standing was beginning to recover.

It found support for Labour had risen in the final three months of 1997 in each mainland state while support for the ruling conservative coalition "was either stagnating or dropping."

Labour's biggest gains came in Queensland where it recovered from a 33.2 per cent trough to reach a lead with 42 per cent of respondents saying they supported the opposition.

Conversely the government's support slid from 55.2 per cent to just 37 per cent — its worst figure in

the state.

In South and Western Australia, Labour's support was almost as strong, in each case rising from the mid-30s to around 40 per cent.

The poll found that in the most populous states of New South Wales and Victoria, Labour was three and five per cent ahead of the coalition.

The poll found that government enjoyed a lead over the opposition in only one age group, the over-50s, having slipped behind Labour in each of the other age groups since March last year.

On the question of whether Mr. Howard or Mr. Beazley would make the better prime minister, the poll concluded voters were equally divided on 37 per cent each, although 54 per cent were dissatisfied with Mr. Howard's performance compared to 35 per cent dissatisfied with Mr. Beazley's performance.

Support for Mr. Howard has crashed across the board, with this lost support not resulting in an increase in the proportion of those uncommitted, but an increase in support for Mr. Beazley, the paper said.

The One Nation party founded by anti-Asia MP Pauline Hanson enjoyed the backing of only two per cent of capital city voters and four per cent of voters in the rest of the nation, with support in her home state of Queensland highest on five per cent, the survey found.

Gandhi widow's move from 'purdah' to politics likely to attract flak

NEW DELHI (AFP) — The shock decision by Rajiv Gandhi's widow to give up "purdah" for politics and campaign for her husband's Congress party in India's upcoming elections could turn into a baptism by fire, the media here said Tuesday.

Sonia Gandhi's move might help galvanise the ailing Congress, formerly led by Rajiv before his assassination in 1991, but could also demystify the myth surrounding her, they said.

The Indian Express said the Italian-born Sonia, who has previously chosen to remain as a behind-the-scenes force in the Congress, would be thrust into centre stage just when the party's fortunes were at their lowest.

"The elections will put to a severe test Sonia Gandhi's ability to garner votes. And also her willingness to give up the comforts and safety of the fortified bungalow to mix with the people," it said.

India goes to the polls around February, with the Congress and the Hindu nationalists both hoping to head the country's new government.

The Congress, rocked by a series of recent splits, hopes to exploit the charisma surrounding the Gandhi name to reverse years of declining support.

The Pioneer newspaper warned, however, that Gandhi's entry into mainstream politics would make her more accountable to both Congress and her critics.

"The discarding of the purdah by Sonia Gandhi is welcome news not only for the Congress but for all who have chafed at the unaccountable power that she has wielded so far," it said.

The Express said although her decision would "stem the exodus" of party members, it would also give rival parties more ammunition against the Congress.

It said the opposition would rake up a 1986 bribery scandal which led to the fall of her husband's government and the alleged role of an Italian businessman who was a close friend of the couple.

The Express said India's Hindu nationalists would also question Ms. Sonia's commitment to India and highlight her Catholic faith, with a campaign slogan pitting the Hindu god Ram against "Rome."

The Pioneer added the role of Congress President Sitaram Kesri would also come under scrutiny, arguing he would no longer be able to "keep up the pretence that he leads the Congress."

Mamta Shankar Aiyaz, a former Congress leader and a friend of the Gandhis who quit the party this month, said Sonia Gandhi's decision was "half-cocked."

"I am deeply disappointed that Sonia is campaigning for a party which has drifted so far away from the party of Rajiv Gandhi and Indira Gandhi," he said.



Chicken vendors demand compensation from the government during a protest in Hong Kong, after their chickens and other poultry were slaughtered. (Reuters photo)

Hong Kong under attack over bird flu response

HONG KONG (AFP) — Critics attacked the Hong Kong government Tuesday for reacting too slowly to the deadly bird flu outbreak which has claimed four lives.

As it worked hard to the slaughter of all the territory's 1.3 million chickens in a bid to halt the spread of the virus, the government was criticised for its handling of the health scare.

"I don't think the government has displayed enough transparency in what they have been doing," Leong Che-hung, vice chairman of the Provisional Legislative Council Health Committee, told government-run radio.

He called the decision to kill chickens "irresponsible" following an earlier government statement that it was safe to eat them.

Mr. Leung condemned the authorities for not having "a blueprint" for handling the crisis as well as saying the cull had been "unprofessionally" carried out.

Hong Kong's poultry farmers and stall owners have also criticised the government over the

handling of the health scare.

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Security alert for funeral of Ulster loyalist

BELFAST (AFP) — Security forces in Northern Ireland were on full alert Tuesday for the funeral of a Catholic victim of a reprisal killing as efforts to calm an increasingly tense situation multiplied.

At Portadown, the stronghold of Protestant loyalists opposed to the Northern Ireland peace process, police were out in force to ensure there was no show of paramilitary might at the funeral of Wright, killed in the Maze Prison Saturday by a Catholic splinter group, the Irish National Liberation Army.

Frightened shopkeepers closed down for the funeral. No armed men with their faces hidden in balaclavas would be allowed at the graveside, police said, although the press has already published photographs of Wright in an open coffin surrounded by uniformed, armed loyalist bodyguards.

Details of the funeral were organised in advance by "King Rat" Wright himself, who had escaped six previous IRA assassination attempts.

The Loyalist Volunteer Force leader had also been condemned to death by loyalist paramilitary leaders for opposing the ceasefire it declared to advance the peace process in Northern Ireland.

The Maze killing prompted a massive security inquiry and led to new measures being introduced at the top-security jail outside Belfast, including random searches due to be introduced from Tuesday. But Northern Ireland Security Minister Adam Ingram acknowledged the special regime operating at the Maze when he admitted that the searches could only be carried out with the "prisoners' cooperation" — an authorisation by leaders of the rival Catholic and Protestant militias.

Neither militia has agreed to such searches since July, he said. Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble described the regime in the Maze as "tax" and said: "We believe it's a matter of policy... Everything must be done to make the republican prisoners feel happy, and security just simply became non-existent."

He blamed Northern Ireland Secretary Mo Mowlam.

But both Trimble and Martin McGuinness, chief negotiator for the IRA's political wing, Sinn Féin, at the Northern Ireland peace talks, have called for people to keep their nerves and not to jeopardise the negotiations.

Representatives of the Ulster Democratic Party were meeting paramilitary prisoners at the Maze Tuesday to discuss maintaining the loyalist ceasefire, in place since October 1994, and which is opposed by the UVF. Before Christmas, the militias had shown growing signs of discontent over what they saw as concessions to the Catholic republican camp by both London and Dublin in order to ensure the IRA continued to observe the ceasefire it declared in June.

The introduction of new controls following Wright's murder risks further angering the loyalist militias. And a UDP spokesman warned against any "collective punishments" after the INLA-inspired killing of Wright.

An attempt in April to boost security for the 500 inmates of the Maze after a mass IRA escape bid led to riots by loyalist prisoners.

Ninety minutes before Wright's funeral, the funeral of Catholic Seamus Dillon, who was shot dead in revenge for the UVF leader's murder outside a Dungannon, Co Tyrone Hotel, where he was a security guard, will be held in Coalisland.

Mr Dillon was released from prison in 1994 from a life sentence for an IRA murder. Police have stepped up their patrols throughout the centre of the province where Catholic-run public houses have been told to extend their closing hours.



A worker from India's Congress party, dressed as Hindu lord Rama, leads a protest against the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in New Delhi which it accuses of using religion to build support for itself and of a deep-seated prejudice against India's Muslim minority (Reuters photo)

Outgoing Indian premier regrets defeat over women MP quota

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's outgoing Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral Tuesday said his biggest regret was his government's failure to reserve a third of parliamentary seats for women.

In an interview with a private television channel, Mr. Gujral said he wanted to "apologise to the nation" over the issue.

He told New Delhi Television network: "I am really sorry we have

not moved as far forward as we should have done on women's rights."

Mr. Gujral, who resigned in November but is carrying on as caretaker prime minister until elections due in February, had backed proposals for a 33 per cent women's quota in parliament and in state assemblies in August.

The issue, however, led to heated scenes in parliament which caused the

lower house to be adjourned and the proposals referred back to a special committee for further consideration.

Opponents of the bill argued that if seats were shared out on a gender basis, then reservations should also be made for other minority groups and religions.

Mr. Gujral resigned last month after his minority coalition lost the backing of a key partner.

12 Japanese passengers of ill-fated UA flight in hospital

TOKYO (AFP) — Twelve Japanese passengers were still treated in hospitals Tuesday, some with serious neck injuries, a day after their ill-fated United Airlines hit severe air turbulence, airlines and hospital officials said.

"What we know so far is that there are 12 people being treated in hospitals and two of them are seriously injured," a Japanese official for the United Airlines said.

But one hospital treating six patients from the air accident in which one woman died said four of

them had serious injuries to neck vertebrae.

"These four patients need at least one month for full recovery and two other patients are suffering from bruises on the waist and legs," a hospital official said.

But the hospital official said the patients "can talk and are fully conscious."

Monday, the United Airlines flight with 393 people aboard en route from Tokyo to Honolulu made an emergency return to the New Tokyo International Airport in Narita after it hit severe air turbulence over the

Pacific.

A 32-year-old female passenger, Konomi Kataura, died from head injuries as she was taken to hospital near the airport.

In addition to the 12 in hospital, another 90 suffered minor injuries, an airport official said.

The accident happened as the plane, which was ascending, had reached 9,400 metres. The aircraft fell 300 metres at once before stabilising again, throwing luggage and passengers who were not wearing seatbelts up to the ceiling.

Dog killed after pushing boy out of speeding car's path

CHICAGO (AFP) — "Missy," a one-year-old Belgian shepherd, proved to be six-year-old Dashun McMiller's best friend, pushing the boy out of the path of a speeding car that instead struck and killed the beloved pet.

The 32-kilogramme dog pushed the boy towards his stepfather as the latter fearfully called Dashun to his side as the automobile raced down an alley outside the family home on Chicago's West Side late Sunday.

While experts disagree as to whether the pet knew what she was doing, the boy's stepfather, Anthony Matthews, was very clear that Missy took her role as a watch dog and protector

of his six children and stepchildren very seriously. Mr. Matthews, 31, heard the vehicle careening down the alley where he and Dashun were carrying trash to a dumpster, and worriedly called out to his stepson.

"I said 'Dashun come here,'" said Mr. Matthews. "He started coming my way. I saw Missy running across the alley. She jumped in the air and her front two paws pushed him to me."

At about the same time, a maroon-coloured car struck Missy's hindquarters and continued down the alley at what Mr. Matthews said was a speed of 65 to 80 kilometres per hour.

37 die as Kenya epidemic toll mounts

NAIROBI (AFP) — At least 37 more people have died in the past 24 hours in north-eastern Kenya in a two-week epidemic which has claimed more than 250 lives, press reports said Tuesday.

In Geneva Monday, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said that anthrax and yellow fever were the leading suspected causes of the epidemic.

Initial tests ruled out Ebola fever, the head of WHO's emergent diseases division, David Heymann, said.

Victims suffer diarrhoea and vomiting and eventually bleed to death.

The disease has also wiped out thousands of head of cattle since it first hit the semi-arid region's Wajir and Garissa districts two weeks ago.

Taiwan condemns S. Africa for Beijing switch

TAIPEI (AFP) — Taiwan lodged a strong protest Tuesday against South Africa's diplomatic switch from the nationalist island to mainland China, which was sealed in Pretoria.

Taiwan also reaffirmed its earlier, announcement that 21 years of official relations with South Africa would be severed Wednesday.

"South Africa has recognized Beijing, ignoring its long-standing friendship with the Republic of China (ROC, Taiwan's official name) and the fact that the two sides of the Taiwan Strait are separated territories governed by different authorities," Foreign Ministry Spokesman Roy Wu said.

"We strongly protest to

Pretoria for accepting Communist China's ridiculous "one China" policy," Mr. Wu said in reaction to the China-South African diplomatic accord signed Tuesday.

In the document, which takes effect on Jan. 1, South Africa, Taiwan's last major ally, recognises mainland China as the legal government of all China, including Taiwan.

The switch cut the island's diplomatic allies to only 29.

Mr. Wu said Taipei "deeply regretted" Pretoria's move which had "gravely hurt our country's image and people's feelings."

The ROC had been a sovereign state since it was founded in 1911 in the

mainland, Mr. Wu said.

He refuted the "one-China" claim, saying Beijing had never ruled Taiwan which had been under the jurisdiction of the nationalist government since it fled there in 1949 after losing a civil war to the Communists on the mainland.

"Communist China's hegemonic mentality — trying to eliminate Taiwan in the international community — is really the major obstacle in pushing for peaceful development across the strait," he added.

South African Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo and his visiting Chinese counterpart, Qian Qichen, formally signed the agreement in Pretoria Tuesday opening full diplomatic ties.

South Africa was the largest industrialised country to have official ties with Taiwan until President Nelson Mandela announced a year ago that Pretoria would switch recognition to Beijing.

Mr. Nzo and Mr. Qian also signed an agreement which would allow South Africa to maintain the status of its consul general in Hong Kong, which Britain handed back to China last July.

The countries signed a separate agreement which gives South African Airways landing rights in China.

The Chinese foreign minister is scheduled to open the Chinese embassy in Pretoria Thursday, concluding a five-day visit.

5 Indian activists axed to death, 20 hurt in Indian clashes

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Five party activists belonging to India's Congress party were hacked to death in southern India after a bus was ambushed, the Press Trust of India reported Tuesday.

The five were killed with axes after the bus they were travelling in was stopped in the state of Andhra Pradesh Monday evening.

A group of men blocked the road with boulders and then threw bombs at the vehicle before killing the Congress workers.

The Congress is India's second largest parliamentary party. The country is due to go to the polls in February-March following the collapse of the ruling minority coalition in November.

In another incident, 20 Congress supporters were hurt, six seriously, after being attacked in the northeast of the country. Police said Communist activists armed with "sharp weapons" had carried out the attack in the state of Tripura.

The Congress sparked the upcoming elections by toppling a coalition which was backed by the Communists.

Sixteen ordered jailed in Mexico massacre

MEXICO CITY (AFP) — A Chiapas judge ordered 16 suspects jailed in the massacre last week of 45 Maya in the village of Acteal, as another 80 people under immediate death threat in the same area were given police and military protection.

The 16 suspects, jailed Monday, had been charged Friday with premeditated murder, causing serious injury, carrying firearms without a license and criminal association in the Dec. 22 massacre of 21 women, 14 children, nine men and one infant, the attorney general's office said in a statement.

Overall, 40 people have been detained for questioning. The most prominent was Jacinto Arias Cruz, mayor of Chenalhó township of which Acteal is a part, who was suspected of providing the killers with arms.

More arrests were expected in connection with the five-hour slaughter of Tzotzil Maya.

Squads of soldiers and judicial police fanned out in Chenalhó Monday to pick up 80 members of 13 local families and move them to safe houses in the village of Polho, also in Chiapas, the Fray Bartolome de las Casas Human Rights Centre said.

The rescue mission was ordered on "the certainty that paramilitary groups were seen roaming in the

villages of Puebla and Yajhjel" with the intention of targeting Tzotzil Maya sympathisers of the rebel Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN), the centre said in a statement.

The 80 people who were rescued had received death threats from paramilitary groups in the past 24 hours, the statement added.

Some 4,000 Tzotzil Maya, also fearing further violence, Monday left their homes and headed for Polho, which is an EZLN stronghold.

The rebel group staged an armed uprising in 1994 to demand better living conditions for the mostly indigenous inhabitants of Chiapas, Mexico's second-poorest state.

National Human Rights Committee President Mireille Roccatti said here that the facilities in Polho could not house all the refugees, adding that another 6,000 could make their way there in the next few days.

Attorney General Jorge Madrazo said that the investigation into the massacre pointed towards Chiapas state public security officials and the state's secretary general.

The case could be an embarrassment for the top federal officials in the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) that has ruled Mexico since 1929 as Arias Cruz and others suspected

in the killing are party members.

But it also revealed a split in the party, where reform-minded technocrats dominate the federal levels while state officials are more likely to be fans of the hard-line, old-fashioned PRI.

Mr. Madrazo cited a Dec. 21 meeting "by a group of people who planned the Acteal massacre."

A probe will be carried out to determine "how the group was created to carry out the massacre, why they wore the same clothing, why they were uniformed, how they got high-powered weapons," said Mr. Madrazo.

"No one will escape us, no matter who we turn up. There will be no political, economic or social considerations," he pledged.

Some of those being held were arrested as they sought to flee the region hidden in a truck that was escorted by a state police vehicle.

Four opposition parties from across the political spectrum have demanded a special session of congress to strip Chiapas state officials of their powers and name a provisional government.

After a protest in front of his official residence Sunday, President Ernesto Zedillo reiterated his pledge to punish to the fullest extent those responsible for the bloodbath.

Nyerere to urge Kaunda to retire from politics

LUSAKA (AFP) — Tanzania's Julius Nyerere was expected Tuesday to persuade another of independent Africa's founding fathers, jailed Zambian ex-leader Kenneth Kaunda, to retire from politics, a government source said.

The senior official, who asked not to be named, said that the Tanzanian elder statesman and ex-president was due to spend two hours in the maximum security prison where Mr. Kaunda has been jailed, accused of involvement in a coup plot two months ago.

Pursuing a mission on behalf of countries in the region to win Mr. Kaunda's release, Mr. Nyerere would seek to have his counterpart go into political retirement and end a hunger strike, the official told AFP.

Mr. Kaunda, 73, the first president of independent Zambia, began the hunger strike after his arrest Thursday, but his son, Major Wezi Kaunda said his father had partially broken the fast and was now drinking water.

The former leader bowed to threats from his wife, Betty, a diabetic who is recovering from a stroke and had said she would stop her own med-

ication if the former president failed to take sustenance.

Mr. Kaunda, who ruled the southern African nation for 27 years, has yet to be formally charged.

Soon after his trip to the notorious Mukobeko maximum security prison in the central mining town of Kabwe, Nyerere was expected to brief Zambia's current President Frederick Chiluba on the outcome of his meeting with Mr. Kaunda. Mr. Nyerere held "private" talks with Chiluba Monday night after his arrival here, according to presidential spokesman Richard Sakala, who could give no details of the discussions.

Early Tuesday, the Tanzanian envoy boarded a military helicopter to go and see Mr. Kaunda. "He has flown to Kabwe," the acting secretary general of Kaunda's United National Independence Party (UNIP), Sebastian Zulu, told AFP.

Officials in Dar es Salaam this week said that Mr. Nyerere was sent to Zambia under the aegis of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) regional grouping to plead for Mr. Kaunda's release and defuse the political crisis.

Italian hostage taker frees 3rd captive

MILAN, Italy (AFP) — An armed man laying siege to a Milan bank after reportedly being refused a loan freed Tuesday the third of four hostages.

The armed man, Domenico Gargano, 35, released the Personnel Manager Pietro Ferrari, but was still holding Deputy Manager Vincenzo Carrellino.

He freed the manager of the Banca Popolare, Irma Morello, overnight Monday after freeing another bank employee earlier that day.

Mr. Gargano, who was said to be armed with a pistol and an explosive device, had been demanding 10 billion lire (\$5.7 million) for the release of the hostages. Police said he had later reduced this to six billion lire.

An armoured truck arrived outside the bank during the night, and was reported to be carrying four billion lire. The Italian ANSA news agency said the gunman then asked for a helicopter to get away.

The release of the third captive came after negotia-

tions between Mr. Gargano and a junior member of the Milanese police, who knew the armed man.

Police said Mr. Gargano had requested to speak to the junior officer and asked for nothing in return for freeing Ferrari.

The area surrounding the bank has been totally cordoned off by police.

Mr. Gargano reportedly took action after being refused a loan by the bank because of his criminal record, including theft, violence and attempted extortion.

Dressed in sports clothes, Mr. Gargano entered the bank shortly before it was due to close in the afternoon. He took four staff hostage, while the rest left for the day without realising anything was wrong.

Television reports said earlier that Mr. Gargano, from Palermo, Sicily, appeared to be determined. He had rejected pleas from his mother and girlfriend to give himself up.

Police were only alerted when one employee was released two and a half hours later.

Jordan Times

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Balancing act in motion

JORDAN'S AGREEMENT with Iraq to import about five million tonnes of Iraqi oil in 1998 at the reduced price of \$16.3 per barrel can be hailed as a breakthrough in bilateral economic relations. Equally important is the new accord to lay an oil pipeline linking the two countries which could save up to \$50 million in land transport costs annually in addition to establishing a joint oil services company that would construct a refinery in Aqaba and prospecting for oil in the Kingdom.

The deal, signed earlier this week in Baghdad by Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Mohammad Saleh Horani and his Iraqi counterpart Amer Mohammad Rashid, comes at a critical juncture in the history of ties between the two neighbouring Arab countries.

Relations between Amman and Baghdad became tense in the wake of the execution of four Jordanians a few weeks ago for alleged economic crimes, namely smuggling car parts worth less than a \$1,000 each. But obviously the two states need one another economically. Iraq imports from Jordan goods and services worth \$225 million a year. Jordan, on the other hand, imports from Iraq \$300 million worth of oil and oil products at favourable prices. To purchase the same amount of oil at current market prices would cost Jordan an additional \$160 million a year.

So far Amman and Baghdad have been very successful in separating their cooperation in the economic field from political ties. In order to strengthen further economic cooperation, political ties between the two must also be elevated to new levels. Those relations are, however, being dictated by considerations which go beyond the immediate neighbourhood. While Jordan wishes to restore the relationship to its pre-1990 levels, this is not possible unless Iraq's ties with the rest of the world are restored to the pre-Gulf crisis levels as well. How that can be done is the question that nobody can answer with any degree of certainty, however. For now, Jordan is doing what it can to balance satisfying its needs, serving its strategic interests, with ensuring that Iraq complies with U.N. Security Council resolutions and respects the human rights of both its citizens and those of others, including Jordanians.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Aswaq's Ahmad Dabbas Tuesday demanded that the draft pension law on which the government is reported to be working should be fair to all military and civilian pensioners. The government must bridge the gap between the pension paid through the Social Security Corporation and the regular government pension and between the military personnel pension and the civil servants' pension so that the country will have a single pension plan, Dabbas said. He said that old age pensioners should also be able to help meet the pensioners' minimum requirements. By applying a common pension scheme to all, the government will reduce its administrative expenses and save money that can be invested in income generating projects, the writer said. Furthermore, he said, the government should amend the present civil service retirement system because at present those retired are usually made to do so when they have acquired vast experience and they are replaced by younger employees with poor experience, thus adversely affecting the public administration's performance.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Daoud Al Qarnah claimed that Israeli frozen poultry has started invading the Jordanian markets under foreign trademarks. Poultry farmers have been raising complaints saying that the Israeli poultry is being sold at very competitive prices, and thus can cause local producers to go bankrupt in the long run, according to the writer. He said through the peace process Israelis have been penetrating the Arab markets, particularly Jordan which with its modest economy cannot withstand the new challenge. At the same time, the writer said, the majority of Jordanians who are largely limited-income groups and who are facing continual price hikes of all commodities might opt for the cheaper product. The writer said the government should heed the complaints of the farmers whose interests are damaged and who sooner or later will be driven out of business, to the detriment of the national economy.

Washington Watch

By Dr. James Zogby

Robertson: Bigotry against Islam

IN LATE October 1997, Pat Robertson, a prominent leader of the fundamentalist Christian right wing movement, speaking on his nationally televised "700 Club" programme, launched into an ugly diatribe against Islam. In part he said:

"To see Americans become followers of, quote, Islam, is nothing short of insanity. The Islamic people, the Arabs, were the ones who captured Africans, put them in slavery, and sent them to America as slaves. Why would people in America want to embrace the religion of the slavers. You say 'what's going on in America, when we welcome into our society and give rights to people who are persecuting Christians around the world.' It's time we stood up against this and said 'no more!'"

Many U.S. Christians, Muslims, and Jews wrote to Robertson denouncing his comments and demanding that he apologise to Muslims and to all Americans. Robertson's response to those appeals was shocking. He was not only unresponsive, but emphatic in affirming his intolerance and bigotry towards Islam.

In one letter, dated December 1, 1997, he wrote:

"I said on my programme, and I say now, for any thinking American to embrace Islam is nothing short of insanity. This is not bigotry, it is a fact based on the action of those who hold to Islam all over the world."

This is not the first time Robertson's views have caused outrage and it will not be the last. He is, today, a major political figure who wields tremendous influence. As founder of the Christian Coalition and host of the "700 Club", Robertson directs a media and political empire that reaches tens of millions of Americans.

Robertson began as a religious preacher, he then developed a television programme to expand his audience. The programme grew into a television network and then into multiple networks watched by millions of households weekly.

Robertson's emergence on the U.S. national political scene, on the other hand, began just 12 years ago. In the mid-1980s he began the process that was to transform him from host of a television religious programme to a power broker with the Republican Party.

In 1985 Robertson founded the Freedom Coalition, a grass roots organisation targeted in a few states — those that were important in the presidential primary process. Robertson, then, announced his candidacy for U.S. president in 1986 and ran a strong campaign until 1988. Although he lost that race, his Freedom Coalition proved so effective that Robertson emerged as the leader of the religious right wing current within the Republican Party.

In 1989 Robertson consolidated his 1988 efforts by launching the Christian Coalition designed to press his right wing agenda in U.S. politics. From 1989 to 1996 the growth of the coalition has been phenomenal.

Today, the Christian Coalition is recognised as one of the United States' most powerful grass roots political organisations. It has a membership of 1.5 million and an annual

budget of \$25 million and a paid staff of over 100. At the same time the coalition has an outreach to more than 100,000 churches across the U.S.

The most significant measure of the coalition's strength is the extent to which its grass roots mobilisation has gained power in the Republican Party. Beginning with his 1986 presidential campaign Robertson's effort was focused on running candidates at all levels in local Republican Party elections — from the smallest precinct to State Committees. At present this strategy has gained the Christian Coalition effective control of the party apparatus in 31 of the United States' 50 states. Today, Robertson's group helps to define the agenda for Republican presidential candidates and for the Republican controlled Congress, which was first elected with Christian Coalition support in 1994.

The agenda that Robertson seeks to impose on Congress and the White House is not merely his conservative "family values" programme — it includes an anti-Arab anti-Muslim foreign policy component, as well.

But Robertson's ambitions are still unfulfilled. In a September 1997 speech by Robertson to the Christian Coalition leadership he spoke of the work they had to do before the next presidential election in 2000.

"We still haven't gotten the influence we think we ought to have inside the Republican Party," he told his group. "We're still not totally like we should be... we just need to tell them that (Republican congressmen) 'look we put you in power in 1994 and we want you to deliver.' We're tired of waiting. Don't give us all this stuff about well, you've got a different agenda. This is what you're going to do this year and we're going to hold your feet to the fire while you do it."

He then told the group that now that they control Congress, their next goal is to solidify that control and "by the year 2000... have the presidency."

The agenda that Robertson seeks to impose on Congress and the White House is not merely his conservative "family values" programme — it includes an anti-Arab anti-Muslim foreign policy component, as well. These views spring from his strange theology, which is an exotic and unorthodox form of Christianity, called "Premillennialism." According to this theological school, it was necessary for the Jews to come back to Israel as the first step in a process that would lead to the "final days" and the "Day of Judgement."

In outline form the process includes the following: after the Jews return they set up their state in Israel. After a

time, many of these Jews (144,000 to be precise) convert to Christianity. At that point the state of Israel is attacked by the evil nations of the East (described by Robertson to include the Arabs, the Muslims and Russians). This battle grows into a world war with the entire East confronting the West in an nuclear holocaust that destroys almost all of humanity. With only a handful of Christians surviving, Jesus will return and rule over the reconstruction of the earth for 1000 years of peace and prosperity.

These outrageous views are adhered to by only a handful of "Christian" thinkers. They are completely rejected by all of the major recognised mainstream Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant Churches. Moreover, most of the views of the "700 Club" and the members of the Christian Coalition do not even know the details of the Robertson's exotic theology. And certainly the Jewish and pro-Israeli organisations that welcome Robertson's political support know nothing of the fact that his backing of Israel is predicated on his belief that Jews will convert to Christianity and bring about a holocaust that will destroy most of the earth.

What Robertson's followers and his pro-Israel allies know is not his theology but the politics that flows from his theology — that is, the Arabs and Muslims are enemies of Israel and are, therefore, evil and not to be trusted. Peace is, therefore, not desirable, and war is actually to be encouraged since it may lead to the hoped for "final battle." The "700 Club" regularly includes anti-Arab propaganda. Robertson's television network has started an affiliate in Israeli occupied southern Lebanon and a supportive group has opened what they call the "Christian Embassy" in Jerusalem.

In 1982, when Israel invaded and devastated large parts of Lebanon, an excited Robertson used maps on his daily television programme to predict the coming of the final battle. He did the same thing in 1991 during the Gulf war. Despite disappointments on both of those occasions, he continues to work to build the enmity needed to realise his theological aspirations.

Robertson's group was among the strongest advocates for the congressionally passed "Jerusalem Embassy Bill" and other anti-Palestinian legislation. They are also leading the effort to impose sanctions against Arab and Muslim countries that they accuse of persecuting Christians and Jews.

While it is important to question and criticise discriminatory treatment against any religion, it is equally important to note that Robertson's effort is motivated principally by bigotry against Islam and a theology which requires hostility between East and West.

The time has come for Robertson's theology to become known and those who follow his lead or who accept and benefit from his support to be held accountable. In response to his recent attacks against Islam, many Christian, Muslim, and Jewish leaders have written to Robertson demanding that he apologise for his intolerance and prejudice. More must be done. Politicians must denounce Robertson's views as well.

CNN host shows 'non-concern' for Christians of the Holy Land

By Kamal Salibi

THE CHRISTMAS Day Q&A Programme on the CNN hosted the Reverend Ray Lockhart, of the Christ Church in Jerusalem, who treated the countless international viewers of this leading news network to a remarkable array of misinformation and false analysis regarding the Christians of the Holy Land.

Of the 13 denominations of indigenous Palestinian Christians, the Reverend Lockhart had nothing to say. (He was in fact dismissive of the subject when questioned about it). On the other hand, the clergyman repeatedly came out with baffling statements to the effect that while many Christians (ethnicity unspecified) were leaving the Holy Land, the size of its Christian population (ethnicity again unspecified) was actually expected to grow rather than diminish with time. How so, and why so, was never made clear.

Now, here are the facts of the case, should the CNN and other international news networks be interested to know.

1. The Christ Church, to which the Reverend Ray Lockhart belongs, is a charismatic Anglican church in Jerusalem functioning under the broad umbrella of the Church (of England) Missionary Society (CMS), its following in the Holy Land numbering barely 2000, the majority expatriates.

2. The evangelical efforts of this highly unrepresentative Protestant

missionary body are concentrated largely on the Jews. To the Christ Church, the indigenous Palestinian Christians, being set in their traditional errors, are unamenable to conversion to proper Christianity, unlike the Jews, whose admittedly lost souls are redeemable, provided the proper effort is made in that direction.

This explains the non-concern of the Reverend Lockhart and his church for the sad fact that so many Palestinian Christians (always left unnamed) are leaving the Holy Land; also, his curious assertion that the numbers of Christians in the Holy Land (again deliberately left unnamed) is bound to grow in the long run, despite the steady drain (presumably of the dispensable Palestinian Christian elements).

The same fact also explains the enthusiasm repeatedly expressed by the Reverend Lockhart for the increasing settlement of the non-Israeli parts of the Holy Land by Jews. After all, the more Jews there are in the whole land, the more there would be lost Jewish souls for the Reverend Lockhart and his Christ Church to save.

As a mainstream Protestant (a Congregationalist in Lebanon, and a member of the Arab Episcopal Church in Jordan), I am appalled by the strangeness of some of the more peculiar offshoots of Protestantism. And watching the Reverend Lockhart voice his prejudices on my television screen was, for me, an embarrassing

experience — all the more so because the deliberate misinformation he came forth with was expressed in the name of the Christian confession I happen to profess.

The question, however, remains: why did CNN choose to have the subject of the Christians in the Holy Land presented by such an unrepresentative "follower" of Protestantism and Christianity? Were all the possibilities of finding knowledgeable local Christians or Muslims — patriots or expatriates — to present the subject utterly exhausted, so that CNN was finally saddled with the Reverend Lockhart? Or did the "world news leader" actually intend to have the subject treated in the manner that it was — as a sort of a Christmas joke?

One can think of other reasons why CNN chose to inflict the Reverend Lockhart of the Christ Church on its international viewers, but the exercise would be pointless. What is important remains the subject — the Christians of the Holy Land — and the necessity that CNN treat it in an alternative Q&A Programme of a more serious nature — if for no other reason but to maintain its reputation (at least, with people such as myself) as a responsible news network.

The writer, a professor of history at The American University of Beirut, is director of Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies in Amman. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

Sugar Free

BY RAMZI E. KHOURY

Inter-religious harmony!

SINCE SUBSTANCE control is horizontally established as an act of suffering, and since it happens to be one of the more prominent ways to get closer to Heaven without actually having to make the trip, there is no reason why we shouldn't use it to bring religions closer together.

When Christians fast, they are not allowed to eat meat and dairy products. If it wasn't for the "no problem with fish" allowance, those who practice this fast would periodically find the opportunity to be vegetarian or vegan depending on the sect they belong to. But what if a person is savouring homous with a side plate of vine leaves stuffed with rice, tomato and a dash of mint that day? Is that considered a form of suffering? Is ordering lobster thermidor after an appetiser of shrimps garnished with salmon mousse and topping the meal with a generous slice of Black Forest cake, an act of fasting? Yes, if you are allergic to seafood!

Why not personalise the affair by allowing the fastidious to decide that day what it is that they can't tolerate to eat, and have them ingest it?

As for Muslims during Ramadan, friends from other religions can get involved in ensuring that one's fasting is working well by waving the substance of desire in front of their eyes and nose to make them crave it even more until their knees start trembling. If that doesn't work, they must consume it before their very eyes with clear signs of pleasure, such as the smacking of lips, rolling of eyes and voicing of a couple of sighs. The procedure must be repeated on the hour.

This will make Jordanians of different religions depend on each other in order to insure a place in Heaven. The procedure could be called: Ascending Through Negative Temptation.

In return, when Christians fast, Muslims could exercise the bonding thing by digging their teeth into a juicy USDA fillet mignon while the person hoping for heaven is chewing on a dry piece of Arabic bread (the one baked without milk and sold at a lower price) softened with a sip of water. This would also answer the national question: why is there bread, and better bread?

Whether Muslim or Christian, for as long as one believes that God is watching us, from a distance, this procedure will establish the mechanism of committing a sin, then being absolved of it. While helping each other implement the rituals of their religion to the letter by exercising temptation, Muslims and Christians would be accumulating enough sins to warrant fasting for the entire year, which would ensure that the nation is always engaged in heavy consuming. That, in turn, would help attract investments in food processing and packaging.

Because our government has good experience in the service industry, it can help manifest this great idea by setting up "teasing stalls" all over the Kingdom. Depending on who is fasting at the time, the government would hire members of the other religion to do the teasing, which would cut down on unemployment.

Notwithstanding that they may start wishing for a better life after death, the atheists would be made to continue negotiations on all tracks with Netanyahu, to help them live the ultimate fasting experience of all times. This procedure could be called Comprehensive Bonding to Bring All Back To God, or for short, the Ultimate Pain Experience. Masochists would not be allowed to participate.

Related reading:

- The Unimaginable Sin: How come Iraqis have been fasting non-stop?
- Jordan: Ways to convince hotels you are foreign and get a drink.
- All Year Fasting: Fundamentalism or mere poverty?
- The Speed Sensitive Diet: Fast without slowing down.
- Are nicotine patches allowed during Ramadan?

LETTERS

Their right to know

To the editor:

THE RECENT decision of the Parliament's General Secretariat to ban reporters and journalists from covering the Parliament's sessions is an unacceptable action and has no justification whatsoever and is nothing but an attempt to undermine the freedom of press. The consequent decision of the four Arabic daily newspapers to boycott the Parliament's sessions is the appropriate procedure to counter the rather unpalatable parliamentary measure.

It is really ironic that some deputies who campaigned on slogans such as: "Yes for the freedom of press...." "No for the amendments on the Publication Law," are now sitting silent in the Lower House opting to take no action. It goes without saying that the Parliament is the house of the people where, and as such means that one has the right to know what their elected representatives are doing in the chamber. Besides, the parliamentary sessions are meant to debate the concerns of citizens which should not be kept secret.

Mazen Al Tamimi
 Amman

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

New study presents scenarios for future ties between Jordan, PNA

By Alia A. Toukan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — An academic study examining four possible future scenarios of Jordanian-Palestinian ties has caught the attention of top decision makers in Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

The first study, it poses alternative models for future relations between the two entities, but steers clear of advocating any one of them.

Published in Arabic and English, "Jordanian-Palestinian Relations: Where To? Four Scenarios for the Future," is a joint effort by Mustafa Hamameh, director of the Centre for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan, Khalil Shikaki, of the Centre for Palestine Research and Studies (CPRS) in Nablus, and Rosemary Hollis, head of the Middle East programme at the London-based Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House).

The study takes into account factors such as historical and familial linkages between the two banks, economic trends, land and water distribution, security concerns, public opinion and the roles of external factors.

It also views the dynamics and influence of the Palestinian-Israeli relationship as a backdrop to Jordanian-Palestinian ties, such that the three entities form a triangle.

Within this triangle, however, "while the Palestinians and the Jordanians conduct separate dealings with Israel on a bilateral basis, there is no parallel Jordanian-Palestinian understanding or structured dialogue," reads the introduction.

"Instead, a general sense has prevailed that normalisation of this relationship must await the conclusion of a final status agreement between Israel and the Palestinians."

"The tendency in both Jordan and Palestine is to wait and see what Israel can be persuaded to deliver before determining their bilateral relationship with each other," the book continues.

Complete with maps and tables, the book outlines the following four scenarios, with the implications of each on the status of Jerusalem, and internal Jordanian-Palestinian relations in the Kingdom.

The "drift scenario" describes the lack of initiative on all three sides, and "separation," is the scenario depicting what would happen if Jordan and Palestine deliberately chose to take divergent paths. "Functional," is an option describing what could happen if the Palestinians achieve no more than autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza. The premise of this scenario is that a headline Israeli government determines the outcome of events, with the Jordanians and Palestinians behaving in "reactive mode." In such a scenario, a division of labour

between the Jordanians, Palestinians and the Israelis would take place in 'autonomous areas' in the West Bank and Gaza, where the PNA would not get more than 'functional autonomy'.

With the pushing of a headline Israeli government, Jordan would increasingly find itself pulled into Palestinian affairs, as Israel convinces Jordan's leadership that the Palestinians would find more coming their way, if the Kingdom worked on their behalf.

"King Hussein of Jordan could not formally endorse an Israeli strategy for 'autonomy-plus,' but he could find himself drawn into the Israeli agenda."

"This could come about if Israeli manoeuvres and the reactions of Arafat and the PLO progressively weakened the authority of the PNA, thereby opening up a vacuum which Jordan would end up filling for fear of something worse," reads the book.

"Cooperation," is an option chosen by Jordan and Palestine to work closely together. This includes cooperation in the form of a unity, a confederation, or a federation.

A prelude to this scenario, however, is the settlement of final status issues between the Palestinians and Israelis, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

The book notes that currently ties are developing towards 'drift' or the 'functional' scenarios, explaining that the reason could be because both options do not require the two leaderships to take charge.

At the moment, however, the Palestinian leadership is advocating the 'separation' scenario, says the book, noting that the PNA "may well...see cooperation as a danger to the potential gains to be derived from separation."

"President Arafat certainly appears to want to consolidate an independent power base before discussing relations with Jordan in any detail."

"However, if he sensed his situation weakening, it would not be beyond him to seek some assistance from Jordan," continues the book.

In relation to Jordan, the study notes that the leadership has little incentive to work closely with the Palestinians, "so long as it has been pursuing its own independent agenda with the Israelis with some success."

Also, if President Arafat makes little headway with the peace process and he personally asks for King Hussein's intervention, then Jordan would "enter the arena with more room for manoeuvre."

"In the meantime, the mutual suspicion between King Hussein and President Arafat is such that they will not make natural partners," concludes the book.

Correspondents assess what lies ahead in '98

Associated Press

MONEY WILL be on a lot of minds in 1998. Asians are anxious about shoring up their currencies. Europeans are debating how to give up their national money and switch to a single currency. Russians just want to make some.

The world's perennial problems remain. Arabs and Jews enter another year still warily talking peace. Conflict simmers and flares across Africa. Poverty grips much of Latin America.

Yet peace, however fragile, seems to be holding in some African nations long wracked by civil war. Economies are strengthening in much of the Americas. Democracy tentatively retains its foothold in the Third World.

Humankind always has been a swirl of contradictions, a producer of good and ill, and the coming year promises more of the same.

The Associated Press asked some of its correspondents around the world to assess what lies ahead for 1998. Here are their reports on Asia and Europe:

Asia
By Kathy Wilhelm

HONG KONG — Many Asian countries will be preoccupied with rebuilding their financial systems or trying to stave off further currency collapses. They'll be closely watched by the U.S. and other nations whose markets have been rolled by Asia's economic stumble.

Governments accustomed to rapid growth will have to cope with rising unemployment and the political and social tensions it produces.

In Thailand and South Korea, which had the most bad debts and face the deepest recessions, outraged citizens hope newly elected governments will end

the cynicism that helped produce the crisis.

No such change is likely in Indonesia, also badly hit. The National Assembly is expected to expand President Suharto's powers to declare a state of emergency in case economic hardship produces unrest.

Japan seems to be learning from its neighbors' meltdowns and is expected to let more indebted banks and companies shut down rather than try to prop them up.

Hong Kong will hold its first elections under Chinese rule. Democrats who lost legislative seats with the handover say new election rules favour pro-business and pro-China parties.

Elections also are planned in the Philippines and in Cambodia, where strongman Hun Sen has quashed most opposition by force.

Chinese President Jiang Zemin plans cautious moves to reorganise or close debt-ridden state industries. His main challenge will be containing protests from laid-off workers, making 1998 an unlikely year for political reform or softening on dissent.

Beijing's tense relationship with Taiwan likely will be tested. If pro-independence forces on the island gain seats as expected in legislative elections.

Australia may face early elections because of a deadlock in parliament over government efforts to restrict aborigines' land rights.

Europe
By Jeffrey Uhrich

BRUSSELS, Belgium — The European Union, in one of the biggest steps toward unity in continental history, is beginning the process of joining a dozen countries in a single currency — an act as much political as it is economic.

The new notes and coins won't fill cash registers until 2002, but the 15 EU leaders will decide over a long weekend in May who gets in on the first wave and the value of national currencies against the new "euro."

Eastern Europe will join the Unity Act as well when EU enlargement negotiations open with a number of former Soviet bloc nations.

Three of those nations — Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic — also anxiously await ratification of their invitations to join the 16-nation NATO military alliance. At the same time, NATO is looking for ways to bring the suspicious Russians closer.

Bosnia will continue to preoccupy Europeans East and West. It is virtually certain the NATO-led peace force will extend its mission past June on the widely accepted assumption that withdrawal would lead to a resumption of war.

Two other clouds loom in the Balkans — between Serbs and Albanians in the Serbian province of Kosovo and between Albanians and Macedonians in Macedonia.

Romania and Bulgaria, left out of the first phase of NATO and EU expansion, are striving to overcome years of bad post-communist government. While Hungary seems to have righted itself, the Czechs face a protracted period of economic and political instability.

Germans will decide in September whether to reward Chancellor Helmut Kohl with an unprecedented fifth term as head of Europe's most powerful economy. The opposition Social Democrats are moving toward a more business-friendly posture in an effort to end the Conservatives' 15-year lock on power, but they can't decide whether to challenge Kohl with a leftist or a moderate.

WHERE TO GO THIS WEEKEND

Yes, that's right, the Zarqa River

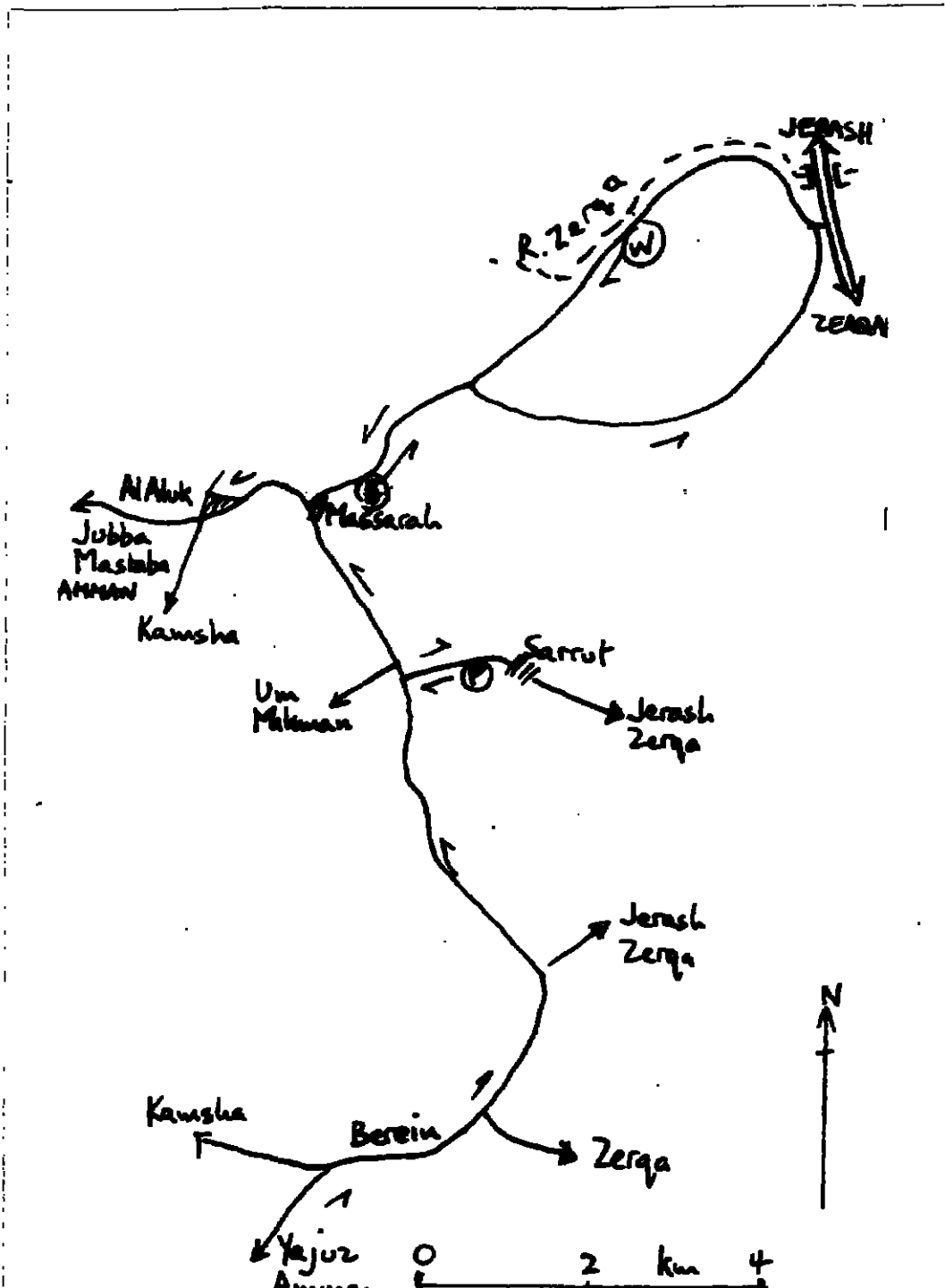
This feature is the second in a short series to provide information about the less frequented parts of the country. Geography teacher Richard Tanner guides the reader through the points of interest.

FROM SPORTS CITY roundabout head NE towards Zarqa and, at the second traffic light, turn left for Yajuz, where you will find 1000-year-old pistachio trees (butin) in the old graveyard. Continue northwards on the new road, through Berein and turn right for Sarrut. As you approach this old hilltop village, you'll find some more pistachio trees (P). Return to the Aluk road and make an awkward right-hand turn in Massarah to find substantial Byzantine remains after 200 metres on the right (B). Under the evergreen oak lies the church, identified by its eastern apse and the crosses carved in the massive fallen lintel at its western entrance. Most of the ancient stones have been "quarried" for re-use in old buildings, themselves now abandoned to animals.

As you continue eastwards on this road, views of the Zarqa Valley open up ahead. Turn right at the hilltop hamlet and notice how much drier the land becomes as you drop downwards away from the wetter highlands. Farmers are busy reclaiming this area, terracing the hillsides for fruit and olive trees which they water from plastic ponds with plastic pipes. Immediately before the main Zarqa-Jerash highway, turn left by the most ruins of the abandoned mud-brick houses and drop down to the foaming Zarqa River. Though it is heavily polluted from Amman and Zarqa's sewage, only partially treated at Khirbet es Samra, the river is still impressive. Admire the stone watermills which once lined the river and climb down to the one on your side (W). Imagine water channels bringing the flow from upstream being dropped through the slots to power grindstones turning wheat into flour.

The road narrows and, as you cross the ford, look back for the yellow "crocus" in flowers on the hillside (November). Rejoin the top road and return to Massarah where you turn right for Al Aluk. Enjoy this village and, in spring, the masses of wild flowers carpeting the hillsides between olive and pistachio trees. Continuing westwards, with views over the ever deepening Zarqa Valley, as you drop through Jubba and Mastaba for the Amman-Jerash highway.

The writer, an ex-principal of a British school, is now teaching at Amman Baccalaureate School. He contributed the above article to the Jordan Times.



Masaru Ibuka, founder of Sony

Japan, the world lose an 'economic animal'

Masaru Ibuka, electronics engineer and industrialist; born Nikko, Japan April 11, 1908; founder, Tokyo Tsushin Kogyo (later Sony Corporation) 1946, president 1950-71, chairman 1971-76, honorary chairman 1990-94, chief advisor 1994-97; twice married (one son, two daughters); died Tokyo December 19, 1997.

By James Kirkup

IN THE land of the "economic miracle" the Japanese themselves coined the term "economic animal" to define what they perceived as their role in the jungle of international trade and industry. Masaru Ibuka, the co-founder of one of post-war Japan's industrial giants, was no animal. He was the blessed exception, a human genius of a kind that is becoming increasingly rare. He belonged to an endangered species, preserved in his natural habitat, the Sony factory.

Ibuka was educated at Waseda Senior High School and Waseda University, where he made his mark as a research engineer in the photochemical laboratory. While he was working there, in the years 1933-37, his first brilliant invention was a form of neon called "modulated light transmission system." This won a prize at the 1933 Paris Exhibition. He was described as a "student inventor of genius."

It was a form of imaginative intuition that gave him his flashes of inventive inspiration. This unique insight is almost an artistic gift, and is rare in Japan, as he discovered in his post as manager of the Radio Telegraphy Department of Japan Audio Optical Industrial Corporation, from 1937 to 1940, and as managing director of the Japan Measuring Apparatus Co., 1940 to 1945. In May 1946, Ibuka founded Tokyo Tsushin Kogyo (Tokyo Telecommunications Engineering Co.), which was to become the Sony Corporation.

The Japanese economy after the World War II was in a state of complete collapse. The company was capitalised at only 190,000 yen and employed 36 people. Management policy was to keep the company to a workable size, and not to chase grandiose ambitions. At the modest party cele-



Masaru Ibuka

brating the company's foundation, Masaru Ibuka made a speech, saying: "We can never achieve anything if we try to do things as big companies do. But there are lots of empty commercial slots we could occupy in electronics technology."

"What people call 'business' is, I think, the ability to create things with necessary effort, so that we can earn money wiping the sweat from our brows."

Ibuka had a very pure sense of business, and claimed that he had almost no management ability, and few ideas about how to make lots of money. But he possessed the wonderful human gift of being able to attract the right kind of collaborators, those rare people with talent and imagination. Among them was Akio Morita, who was to take over from Ibuka as Sony's chairman, and a number of young "disciples." Working for Ibuka was like joining a sect.

Yet the development of the com-

pany was a sequence of failures and successes.

Ibuka's first bright idea was to create an electrically heated carpet, ideal for spreading on chilly tatami, and it sold very well. But it has no thermostat, and no adiabatic material, and he was worried in case one caused a fire. Then the main hall of Horyuji Temple in Nara was burnt down by an electric "sitting mat" of the same type — not made by Ibuka's firm; so he stopped making the product.

The company's first big success was the creation of the first Japanese tape recorder. Ibuka started painting metallic tape with a magnetic substance, a paste that was initially applied to the tape by hand, with brushes made from the hairs of tanuki, the beloved Japanese badger. It was first produced in February 1949, and gradually gained worldwide renown. They also made a very high-quality tape recorder called "Betamax," but this was a failure. These ideas came from Ibuka's long experience in the photochemical laboratory.

From his early career in electrical engineering he developed a transistor radio, another huge success that led to Sony's becoming a worldwide enterprise with production outlets in the United States, Great Britain, Holland, Hong Kong and many other countries. The item entered world history when the prime minister of Japan, Eisaku Sato, visited France and greeted de Gaulle with the gift of a

Sony transistor, whereupon de Gaulle called him "the transistor salesman."

Ibuka supervised the team that invented the Trinitron TV System in 1967, the first high quality colour transmission technique. His company, officially known as the Sony Corporation from 1958, produced among other things the stereo "Walkman" headphone that became such an essential part of youth culture. With Philips, Sony later co-developed several products, including compact discs.

Masaru Ibuka was twice married. For his second wife, he chose a woman he had been in love with since his youth. This remarriage, after a waiting period of 30 years, was regarded in Japan as highly romantic, and Ibuka was called "the last romanticist to be born in the Meiji Era." But he had many other titles and honorary awards; he was a Foreign Associate of the British Academy and the recipient of the Order of the Sacred Treasure (First Class), the Order of the Polar Star (First Class), the Order of the Rising Sun (First Class) and the Ministry of Education's Order of Merit. He was also president of the Boy Scouts of Nippon, and his last title at Sony, dedicated to him with awe and respect, was Supreme Founder and Consultant.

Ibuka was enthusiastic about early education in childhood, hoping thus to develop a generation of inventors, and wrote two books on the subject, *Zero sai ji* (Zero-Year Child, 1970) and *Kindergarten is Too Late* (1971). After collapsing with arhythmia in 1992, he was confined to a wheelchair, where his favourite occupation was listening to company reports.

With Ichiro Honda and Kohnosuke Matsushita, Masaru Ibuka formed the grand trio of famed Japanese industrialists. An artless, endearing human being, he chased a dream and realised it. Economic Animal Farm will never be the same without him.

The Independent

'Quality' investments seen most attractive after Asia crisis — OECD

PARIS (AFP) — Investors are likely to focus on quality investment of their funds following the Southeast Asian financial crisis and recent volatility in major stock markets, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has said.

"A flight to quality was observable following the confidence crisis in Asia and significant corrections in world stock markets," the OECD said in a report on international market trends.

This search for quality "may persist until investors' confidence has been restored," the report said.

International financing activity had been headed for a record year in 1997, but this may not happen if the Asian financial crisis and stock market volatility lead to "a sharp retrenchment in the final quarter," the report said.

In the first nine months of the year, money raised on international capital markets by emerging economies soared 69.8 per cent from the same period a year earlier to \$155.4 billion from \$91.5 billion.

Financing in OECD

countries meanwhile rose 11.1 per cent, to \$1.64.7 billion from \$1.048.5 billion.

The total volume of gross financing arranged on international markets rose 14.6 per cent in the nine months to September to \$1.364.7 billion from \$1.174.8 billion in the same period of 1996.

The United States was top of the list with \$353.7 billion, followed by Germany at \$166.6 billion and Britain with \$129 billion.

International stock market investment also rose sharply in the first nine months of the year, up 36 per cent to \$53.6 billion from \$39.4 billion a year earlier, the report said.

Privatisations accounted for \$13.6 billion of the total, up from \$8.5 billion a year earlier.

However, "the short-term outlook for international equity placements has become uncertain, reflecting the present state of stock markets worldwide," it added.

"At this stage it is difficult to gauge whether the increase in stock market volatility will persist or whether major stock mar-

kets will stabilise."

If volatility continues, this would increase uncertainty about the timing and pricing of stock and loan issues, as well as privatisations, the report said.

But macroeconomic conditions look set to continue stable, and "over time effective measures to achieve macroeconomic stabilisation and to reform financial systems in Southeast Asia should also help rebuild confidence in emerging markets investment."

The planned introduction of a European Union (EU) single currency in 1999 "will also continue to have a significant impact on the behaviour of international borrowers and lenders," the report said.

As long as there is no uncertainty over the euro going ahead on schedule, borrowers will want to have a stake in what will be the world's second largest bond market behind the U.S. dollar, but "any uncertainty about the progress towards a single currency may increase the attractiveness of the dollar or other 'safe haven' currencies."

World oil demand seen rising 2.4 per cent in 1998 — IEA

PARIS (AFP) — World oil demand is expected to rise by 2.4 per cent in 1998 to 75.6 million barrels a day from 73.8 million in 1997, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said in its monthly oil report.

Demand for OPEC oil in 1998 is forecast at an average 26.3 million barrels a day, the IEA said, substantially less than the new output ceiling of 27.5 million barrels a day agreed earlier this month by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) for the first half of 1998.

The IEA also revised upwards its estimate of demand for OPEC oil in the fourth quarter of this year by 0.2 million barrels a day to 27.4 million barrels.

But this too is below estimates of OPEC output in

November of 27.7 million barrels a day, compared with a current output ceiling of 25.033 million.

Next year's output is also likely to be higher than the agreed 27.5 million barrels a day, experts say.

The IEA is holding its forecasts for Asian oil demand next year unchanged from the last monthly report, despite the worsening southeast Asian financial crisis, with demand outside China forecast to rise to 9.6 million barrels a day in 1998 from 9.0 in 1997.

China's demand for oil is expected to rise to 4.2 million barrels a day next year from 3.9 million this year.

The IEA is forecasting oil demand of 75.7 million barrels a day in the fourth quarter of 1997, rising to

76.1 million in the first quarter of 1998 before falling back to 73.8 in the second quarter and 74.8 in the third quarter. But fourth quarter demand will be sharply higher, at 77.8 million barrels a day.

OPEC's decision to raise its output quotas, coupled with an easing of Iraqi tensions, suggested a softer oil market, the IEA said.

"However, oil supply growth paused after strong gains in October and demand is thought to have continued its seasonal growth."

Declines in OPEC production were sufficient to offset modest growth in non-OPEC supplies in November.

However, for the first half of 1998 "fundamentals look weaker."

Analysts: Asia risks inflation as IMF conditions bite

HONG KONG (R) — Asian nations suddenly facing economic hardship might risk fuelling inflation to provide the calming illusion of wealth to their citizens, analysts said.

Countries already facing rising unemployment, a loss of financial system confidence and massive bad debts are now confronted with harsh conditions attached to aid from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

So analysts think they may resort to printing money to stimulate spending, boost their economies and thereby prevent social unrest. Market sources say privately that some central banks do want to crank up the presses.

"What people normally do is let inflation go because it keeps the masses tame for six months while you try to solve some problems," said Marshall Mays, strategist at Nikko Securities. Recession often prompts governments to boost their economies with easier money supply, which can take the form of lower interest rates, a budget deficit or simply printing more money.

"When central banks are looking at times of recession, the best thing they can do is take an accommodative stance to money," said Jake Van Der Kamp, strategist at ABN Amro.

But easier money always carries the risk of inflation and this presents a considerable challenge to Asian central bankers.

"If they ease too much, they get inflation. If they don't ease

enough, they get deflation. This is the thin line upon which governments are walking. But they want enough liquidity to keep people from rioting," said Mr. Mays.

For about a decade, most Asian countries pegged their currencies to the U.S. dollar or a basket of currencies dominated by the U.S. dollar. But this year, speculators broke up Asia's U.S. dollar bloc and provoked a major correction, many currencies losing 30 to 50 per cent of their value.

Some Asian nations now face recession, and the prospect of social unrest as IMF conditions attached to aid start to bite.

Some market sources said central banks could print money to avoid the worst pain while restructuring occurs.

"People have not identified the role of the central banks in some of these economies (in responding to the market crises)," one strategist said. "The only way (cash-strapped) banks can continue to lend under a flexible exchange rate system is if they get support from the central bank. So if a government says it's not prepared to tolerate low growth, the central bank comes under pressure (to print money to pump liquidity into banks)," he explained.

Some market sources said some banks had already printed money, considered a very risky response to any condition except economic deflation.

Rapid declines in stock and property markets throughout Asia have confirmed the pres-

ence of asset price deflation, with stock and property prices falling sharply.

This has happened in several of Asia's battered economies, such as South Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand.

But only Japan and China are considered candidates for general economic deflation — where the volume of money in circulation shrinks and all prices, not just asset prices, fall into a downward spiral.

"If asset deflation continues in a rapid and prolonged fashion it could lead to an economic deflation," said Jan Lee, chief economist at Hongkong Shanghai Bank. "But all we've seen so far is asset deflation."

In fact, most of Asia was experiencing inflation in the general economy at the same time that asset prices were falling, economists said.

Cheaper currencies have made imports more expensive, putting pressure on wages and prices just as food costs started to rise due to bad harvests damaged by the El Nino weather pattern.

Under these conditions, easing money supply was foolish, said Pauline Gately, strategist at BZW Asia.

"You could very easily get into an inflation spiral and potentially stagflation, where the economy doesn't pick up but you have inflation as well," she said.

"That is not the route I'd like to see. I think it's much better if they stick to tight fiscal and monetary discipline," Ms. Gately added.

UAE to force private sector to employ nationals

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is likely to force the private sector to give priority to local labour in a drive to ease reliance on foreigners and tackle joblessness, newspapers reported.

A federal law compelling private institutions to fill vacant jobs with nationals will be enforced from tomorrow, they said.

"The private sector will not be allowed to employ expatriates in any post that could be filled by qualified nationals," said Zain Al Sharif, head of labour recruitment at the ministry of labour and social affairs.

The decision came after private institutions failed to respond to official appeals to hire natives as they prefer cheaper foreign labour.

Labour experts said Asians would be hit hardest by the decision as they

account for nearly two thirds of the UAE's total workforce.

But a large part of them are uneducated workers mostly in small shops and restaurants, hotels, garages and construction.

Nearly 200,000 of illegal Asian migrants, mainly from India, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Pakistan, left the UAE last year after they were offered a four-month amnesty. It was part of a drive by the UAE to cut its dominant foreign population and end upheaval in the labour market.

Mr. Sharif said the ministry would coordinate with immigration departments in the UAE's seven Gulf sheikhdoms to ensure the implementation of the decision. The measures include refusal of visas for new foreign workers whose jobs in the private sector could be taken up by

emirates.

He did not say whether private firms would be forced to pay high salaries to nationals but officials have spoken of incentives for companies employing more locals. They include priority for them in government contracts.

The public sector has already started to give priority to native job-seekers, who have accumulated over the past years because of a surge in university graduates and preference of expatriates by the private sector.

Expatriates account for nearly 80 per cent of the UAE's population of 2.4 million and more than 90 per cent of the 900,000-strong workforce. They started to stream into the desert country in the mid-1960s, when it embarked on a massive construction drive with the help of oil export earnings.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1997

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES

(March 21 to April 19) You are a big person and you need a big goal. Think in terms of the community, maybe even the world. What can you contribute? You've got friends who would love to help. Discuss it at the party tonight. You'll have a New Year's Eve that's worth remembering.

TAURUS

(April 20 to May 20) First, figure out where you want to wind up in 10 years. Then you'll know whether this short-term opportunity is something to go for. A little planning this morning makes a great deal of difference this afternoon. Don't rush into anything, but go if it's right.

GEMINI

(May 21 to June 21) Have you been to Acapulco lately? No? Why not? It's just waiting for you. There are lots of neat things to buy, and the foreign exchange rate is magnificent. Things like that are within your reach. Plan ahead and make them happen. You can definitely start now.

CANCER

(June 22 to July 21) By pooling money with a partner, you can get something bigger than either of you would have been able to afford by yourselves. So, what are you going to buy? Make it clearly known what you want, and have a great time while you're at it.

LEO

(July 22 to August 21) Someone is ripping your pet project right out of your hands. If you're smart, you won't put up much of a fight. This person might do a better job than you would, and that would be OK, maybe even wonderful. Let it happen.

VIRGO

(August 22 to September 22) You'd rather stay home, but someone's dragging you off to a party. Hang in there for as long as you can. Then, scoot back to your little nest. If you don't go, your sweetheart would be bummed. That's no way to start the new year. Better do what's required and take it easy later.

LIBRA

(September 23 to October 22) You and your sweetheart may have been committed to each other for quite some time, but it never hurts to restate your love. This time of year, it's important. Don't sit around and wait for the other person to make the first move. You take the initiative. You'll be glad.

SCORPIO

(October 23 to November 21) This would be a good day to stay home. The work still needs to get done, though, and the money still needs to come in. You just may have to tough it out. Don't take a cantankerous roommate too seriously tonight. Keep on doing the best you can, and let it go at that.

SAGITTARIUS

(November 22 to December 21) As you list the things you want to accomplish next year, put education among them. You'll learn even faster than usual. And you'll be especially good at scientific or electronic subjects. It's about time you learn to run all the latest gadgets. So get busy.

CAPRICORN

(December 22 to January 20) Set a financial goal that's lofty enough to keep you interested. Make a nice, big, juicy, terrifically out-there-kind of a goal that you'll be lucky to achieve. You might not make the whole thing, but that's OK. If you only get half of it, you'll be better off, won't you?

AQUARIUS

(January 21 to February 19) Get a friend to help you think of New Year's resolutions. Your list isn't anywhere near long enough. Besides, there are still some world problems that need solutions. Join them down. You could get lucky. Make sure you remember the part about residuals. Might as well make this pay.

PISCES

(February 20 to March 20) It's time to do the stuff you've been putting off. Go through paperwork, pay bills, read letters, make phone calls. It's important to do it now, because you'll want to do other things later. Don't forget to write down your resolutions. You can keep them secret, but be bold.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

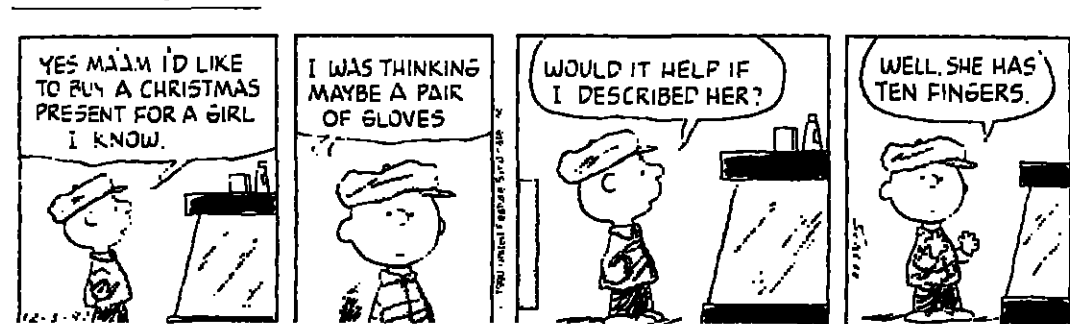
ACROSS

- Misbehavior
- Asian or Wilhelm
- Fairway call
- S. Korean city
- From a distance
- Novelist Murdoch
- Start of a message
- CIA forerunner
- SS
- Stored fodder
- Author of "Them"
- Negative conjunction
- Second part of the message
- Arctic to Kazakhstan range
- Wine sediment
- Author Levin
- Elitist crime-stopper
- Divulged
- Champagne chiller
- Obtained
- McCarthyism letters
- Soft footwear
- Third part of the message
- Chapel Hill succ.
- Diga's successor
- Funniest arbitrarily
- Dropout's 2nd chance
- Mill. branch
- End of the message
- Sanjeter
- Electronics giant
- "M*A*S*H" clerk
- Not enough?
- Singer James
- Alternative to a steam

DOWN

- Sphere starter?
- Small islands
- Fictional slouches
- Inarticulate comment
- Muslim veils
- Pig's innards
- Frequently, in poems
- Sweet potatoes
- Christmas display
- Valer in a Mozart opera
- Source for repros
- Prevailing
- Guessed figs.
- Jon
- Braies
- Temple team
- At. no. 14
- Mold, midew, and smut
- Sandwich cookies
- Selassie worshipping
- Aviv
- Nina, of perfumes
- "Enterprise" travels
- Crails
- Come to an end
- Flux
- Davenport's location
- From now on
- Thick pitches
- Royal shade
- Honshu city
- Arabian seaport
- 60s do
- Sound of pain
- Red explorer?
- Highlander
- Pakistan language
- Geiz or Kanton
- Racing org.
- Tolkien's tree
- Letters on many cars

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

RINBY

USVEA

YIPLOC

EDDOCE

Print answer here: A

Yesterday's Jumbles: GOURD LAUGH YEARLY FLABBY

Answer: What Christmas is for merry — A HOLLY DAY

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Apple

He's hiding something

WHAT THE CROOKED POLITICIAN WAS INVOLVED IN WHEN HE PAINTED HIS OFFICE

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon

(Answers tomorrow)

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Study analyses production costs in various Jordanian industries

A STUDY prepared by the Royal Scientific Society has shown the following results concerning production costs in Jordanian industries:

1. Most of the production costs in Jordanian industries covered by the study were for operational purposes as it accounted for 93.8 per cent in large industries, 68.9 per cent in medium-size industries, and 89.3 per cent in small industries.

2. Administrative expenditure did not exceed 5.4 per cent of total production costs in large industries and 5.1 per cent in medium-size industries. The rate was 10.7 per cent in small industries and that indicate how much small industrialists exaggerate their estimation of administrative spending especially since they manage their own industries.

3. The costs of raw materials in the large industries of mining, textiles, wood and basic metal have exceeded the average of total costs (79 per cent). As such, to influence and lower production costs in large industries, the first step should start with cutting raw material costs.

4. The importance of the workforce in reducing production costs increases at medium-size industries especially in the sectors of wood, paper and tools as this element represented 72.6 per cent, 41.9 per cent and 22.6

per cent of the total costs respectively.

5. The percentage of raw material cost has sometimes increased at the expense of lower manpower cost in some industrial sectors. In other industries, the opposite was true. This reflects the intensity of using manpower or capital in the production process.

6. Administrative spending in both public and joint (public and private) sectors exceeded that in the private sector.

It has been found that large joint companies operating in the mining sector spend more on management compared to other joint companies. As for joint medium-size companies, chemical industries were found to be biggest spenders on administrative affairs compared to other industries of the same size. Small-size private sector companies, especially those in the paper and chemical operations, were the largest spenders on management among other private sector firms.

7. The average constant production costs in small industries are higher than similar ones in medium-size or large industries as it accounted for 16.9 per cent of total production costs compared to 9.8 per cent and 10 per cent respectively. Such a situation was mainly related to the location of small industries as the real estate cost becomes higher inside or near residential concentrations (Al Dostour)

Women still paid less than men — EU report

BRUSSELS (R) — Despite the European Union's (EU's) commitment on paper to stamp out discrimination, in practice women are still paid less for an hour's work than men, according to a new report from the EU's statistics office Eurostat.

The report on pay in four of the EU's 15 member states says women in Sweden earn 16 per cent less than male colleagues. In France and Spain 27 per cent less and in Britain 36 per cent less.

"Women managers are worst off compared with men," the report continues. "In the U.K., they receive two thirds the pay of male counterparts. Even in Sweden, which is nearest to equality, it's only 80 per cent."

There is a noticeable trend in all four countries for the gap between male/female earnings to widen the older a woman gets, the report, "How Evenly Are Earnings Distributed," says.

It adds that women with a university degree earn less than men with equivalent

qualifications. The male/female wage gap may be due to the fact that women are more likely to be in jobs that are typically poorly paid, says the study, adding that when women's earnings are recalculated to remove structural differences the gap is smaller.

But it concludes "there still remains an hourly earnings difference between a man and a woman with comparable educational background, in the same occupation and industry, of 13 per cent in Sweden, 22 per cent in Spain, 25 per cent in France and almost 25 per cent in the U.K."

The survey — the first on the wage gap since 1978 — covers hourly earnings in 1995 for full- and part-time work but not overtime, which is still a largely male preserve. Men do three times as much overtime than women in Britain and twice as much in the other three countries.

It puts average gross earnings, including overtime and bonuses, of all full-time adults

as 25,600 ECUs (European currency units) (\$28,500) in Sweden, 24,800 ECUs in France, 22,800 ECUs in Britain and 19,600 ECUs in Spain.

It shows that part-time workers of both sexes earn

much less than full-time workers — up to 40 per cent less in Britain — pointing out that "most part-time workers are in low-paid jobs and most are women." Overall, managers and politicians are the best-paid group, earning up to

twice the national average. The report's findings, which mainly cover the private sector, do not take account of the different tax and social security deductions to which gross earnings are subject in the four countries concerned.

Egypt seeks strategic investors for state firms

CAIRO (R) — Egypt has offered a new swathe of state-owned companies for sale to strategic investors in what analysts said was a sign its privatisation process was maturing.

"It's a sign that the programme is maturing as selling to strategic investors is a natural progression from selling through the stock market as they did in the early stages," Ahmad Jalal, executive director of the independent Egyptian Centre for Economic Studies has said.

The cabinet decided to sell its holdings in companies ranging from big ones such as Nasr Automotive Manufacturing Company and joint venture Cairo

tranches to the public that breathed new life into the Cairo stock market, now feels ready to tackle the more complicated process of strategic sales. "They tried some strategic sales earlier but failed, now, the policy is that investors can take as much time as they want to evaluate the firms. Buyers are also encouraged now as they see a good future for the economy," Mr. Maher said.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
BANKING SECTOR											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 30/12/1997											
PRICE	LAST	COMPANY'S NAME	P/E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF TRADING	VALUE	OPEN	CLOSE	CHANGE	
346.000	269.000	ARAB BANK	14.9	1.23	14	1220	391460	326.00	325.00	1.00	-
2.340	1.680	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	5	0.00	5	1200	2125	1.77	1.78	0.01	+
5.600	1.600	BANK OF JORDAN	5.6	0.00	1	100	56	1.60	1.61	0.01	+
2.680	1.700	JORDANIAN INV. BK.	10.2	6.16	8	328100	541780	1.70	1.70	0.00	-
5.300	4.600	THE JORDANIAN BK.	15.5	3.73	4	5600	28853	5.23	5.20	0.03	+
4.180	1.850	JOR. KINABAT BANK	11.4	0.00	6	1850	3851	2.09	2.14	0.05	+
4.980	620	JOR. GULF BANK	3.8	0.00	4	1500	6200	1.63	1.64	0.01	+
4.050	2.280	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	12.0	4.09	11	2192	5636	2.38	2.35	0.03	+
1.530	1.080	ORIENTAL BK. JORD.	9	0.00	3	1500	1621	1.09	1.08	0.01	-
3.900	2.360	JOR. INV. FID. BANK	14.8	0.00	32	300150	693360	2.40	2.30	0.10	+
2.350	2.350	JOR. INV. FID. BANK/NEW	6	0.00	17	150100	337135	2.35	2.25	0.10	+
4.990	2.500	AMAL BANKING CO.	21.3	0.00	1	200	588	3.10	2.94	0.16	+
BANKING SECTOR TOTALS											
2.950	2.700	JORDAN INSURANCE	12.4	5.19	1	250	723	2.75	2.89	0.14	+
3.500	1.320	REXEL EGYPT INSUR.	18.5	3.20	1	250	868	2.72	1.47	1.25	+
1.780	1.000	ARABIAN SEAS INSUR.	9.1	0.00	1	300	300	0.95	1.00	0.05	+
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS											
2.050	1.550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.3	5.21	8	15400	29558	1.93	1.92	0.01	-
7.500	1.750	VELEC. OWNERS FID.	11.6	3.31	1	100	529	5.04	5.29	0.25	+
6.100	1.500	ARAB TEL. NETS	15.2	4.36	4	100	498	5.20	5.26	0.06	+
3.050	2.300	SHIPPING LINES	14.1	5.37	1	100	242	2.30	2.42	0.12	+
1.250	0.900	RETAIL PORTFOLIO	9	0.20	18	8850	8850	1.03	1.00	0.03	+
7.070	0.800	REAL ESTATE DEV.	15.5	5.36	1	250	1847	1.40	1.39	0.01	-
7.730	0.600	JORDANIAN INTEL. TRAD.	22.6	0.00	7	6500	2895	0.66	0.64	0.02	-
6.000	2.890	ARAB INTEL. DEV. EDUC.	10.0	0.00	4	2204	8480	3.87	3.84	0.03	+
1.050	0.700	JORDANIAN RECENT. DEV.	9	0.00	2	250	255	1.00	1.05	0.05	+
2.150	1.700	UNIFIED CO.	8.1	6.23	2	1500	3375	2.59	1.71	0.88	+
0.880	0.640	UNION LAND DEV.	6	0.00	6	5600	3844	0.71	0.71	0.00	-
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS											
1.160	0.930	ATTACHMENT	9	0.00	1	2000	2320	1.16	1.16	0.00	-
4.650	2.750	JOR. COMEST. FACT.	20.3	3.54	42	78156	216337	3.02	3.02	0.00	-
4.160	1.050	JOR. PRESERVE MOORS	10.3	2.70	4	900	3499	3.91	3.71	0.20	+
11.160	9.200	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.1	7.81	7	487	5084	10.45	10.44	0.01	-
1.410	1.040	WOLLEN INDUSTRIES	11.0	8.57	4	950	1199	1.21	1.27	0.06	+
2.090	1.330	INDUSTRIAL COM. SER.	9	0.30	50	150	140	1.39	1.41	0.02	+
7.350	5.800	JOR. WASTELESS MILLS	11.2	2.87	1	150	1047	7.35	6.98	0.37	+
4.700	3.440	ARAB PHARM. IND.	12.5	4.21	2	7350	30649	4.20	4.16	0.04	+
6.400	0.800	ARAB CEMENT IND.	26.7	3.33	300	3530	2554	8.23	8.52	0.29	+
6.000	4.400	DAR ALMANA. IND.	13.9	4.40	5	950	5397	5.70	5.68	0.02	-
3.850	2.220	ARAB ALUM. IND.	6.2	9.40	2	250	665	2.80	2.66	0.14	+
0.650	0.440	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9.3	0.00	18	11100	6884	0.66	0.66	0.00	-
1.720	0.710	NATIONAL IND.	13.5	0.00	15	13750	1135	0.74	0.71	0.03	+
0.840	0.530	JOR. ROYALTY IND.	9	0.00	8	8400	4975	0.58	0.61	0.03	+
2.930	1.380	UNIV. CHEM. IND.	15.9	5.68	2	900	880	1.68	1.76	0.08	+
0.890	0.530	JOR. SILICO. CHEM.	9	0.00	5	1250	710	0.88	0.86	0.02	-
1.130	0.590	KEMENTER INVEST.	6.3	1.00	4	800	498	0.61	0.64	0.03	+
1.800	0.820	UNIV. MOD. IND.	9	0.26	2	1150	943	0.81	0.82	0.01	-
1.410	0.890	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	9.5	14.38	2	1350	858	1.74	1.71	0.03	+
0.970	0.810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	16.5	0.00	11	24950	22422	0.90	0.90	0.00	-
1.970	1.340	EL. - NEW READY WEAR	12.4	0.00	8	12550	16915	1.42	1.49	0.07	+
1.320	1.080	INDUS. TOBACCO	6.6	0.00	15	92500	63211	1.15	1.15	0.00	-
0.860	0.570	IND. BELL. JOR. SATELITE	7.4	16.67	9	3250	1911	0.60	0.60	0.00	-
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS											
116.52	115.52	INDEX	-0.86		179	228193	418628				
GRAND TOTAL											
169.24	169.24	INDEX	-0.50		338	1069759	2487526				
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 30/12/1997											
0.610	0.340	JOR. TRADE FAC.	9.6	0.00	10	44650	15874	0.36	0.36	0.00	-
0.800	0.460	INDUS. DEV. SOI	9	0.00	16	39800	7810	0.70	0.70	0.00	-
0.570	0.360	ARAB FID. INVEST.	9	0.00	20	57150	2715	0.48	0.48	0.00	-
1.000	0.760	AL-SERAP INV. CO.	9	0.00	5	50000	16000	0.92	0.92	0.00	-
2.220	1.350	CHERATE INV. GROUP	9	0.00	1	250	488	2.04	1.99	0.05	+
350	140	JOR. INDUS. SATELITE-JORD	9	0.00	7	62900	10693	1.17	1.17	0.00	-
0.650	0.440	ARAB FOOD & IND.	9	0.00	8	6000	2708	0.45	0.45	0.00	-
0.530	0.280	ARAB INTEL. DEV. EDUC.	32.2	0.00	4	14000	3920	0.29	0.28	0.01	+
0.750	0.380	IND. BELL. JOR. SATELITE	9	0.00	29	71900	34517	0.48	0.49	0.01	+

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.7890	0.6306	1.4540	139.05	1.4344	1789.06	2.0775	5.9900
DE Mark	0.5580	1.0000	0.3331	0.8125	72.85	0.8913	982.13	1.2270	3.3480
GB Sterling	1.6658	2.9650	1.0000	2.4054	215.01	2.3765	2912.02	3.3400	9.3184
CH Franc	0.6878	1.2200	0.4148	1.0000	88.44	0.8862	1088.52	138.72	4.1183
JP Yen	0.0071	1.3746	0.4038	1.1170	1.0000	1.1021	13.52	154.53	4.8024
CA Dollar	0.6972	1.2391	0.4147	1.0022	1.10	1.0000	127.25	1.3959	4.4427
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0163	0.3428	0.8826	1354.85	0.8149	1.00	71.45	3.9028
NL Guilder	0.4857	0.8858	0.2891	0.7209	64.45	0.7118	872.34	1.00	2.9692
FR Franc	0.1669	0.2985	0.1007	0.2426	21.69	0.2383	33.65	33.6500	1.00

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BRL	QAT	KRW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7085	3.7503	0.3770	3.5490	0.3047	3.6724	1422.00	3.3970
Jordan Dinar	1.4174	-	5.2853	0.5321	5.1376	0.4301	5.1833	2448.20	4.7946
Saudi Riyal	0.2655	0.1788	-	0.9105	0.97	0.9812	0.98	405.83	9.3088
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8793	5.9477	-	0.95	0.8862	9.74	4037.14	9.0185
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1946	1.0303	1.0003	-	0.9837	1.01	412.13	9.9332
Kuwait Dinar	3.2819	2.2582	12.2082	1.2373	11.95	-	12.05	4995.08	0.9302
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1929	1.0212	0.1027	0.9912	0.9802	-	414.44	0.9250
Lebanese/1000	0.95	0.4655	2.4641	0.2477	2.2916	0.2830	2.4129	-	2.2519
Egyptian	0.2544	0.2086	1.1040	0.1113	1.0715	0.8857	1.0811	448.05	-

1997 Sports Champions — a look back

By The Associated Press

• AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Super Bowl (NFL) — Green Bay Packers
AFC Champion — New England Patriots
NFC Champion — Green Bay Packers

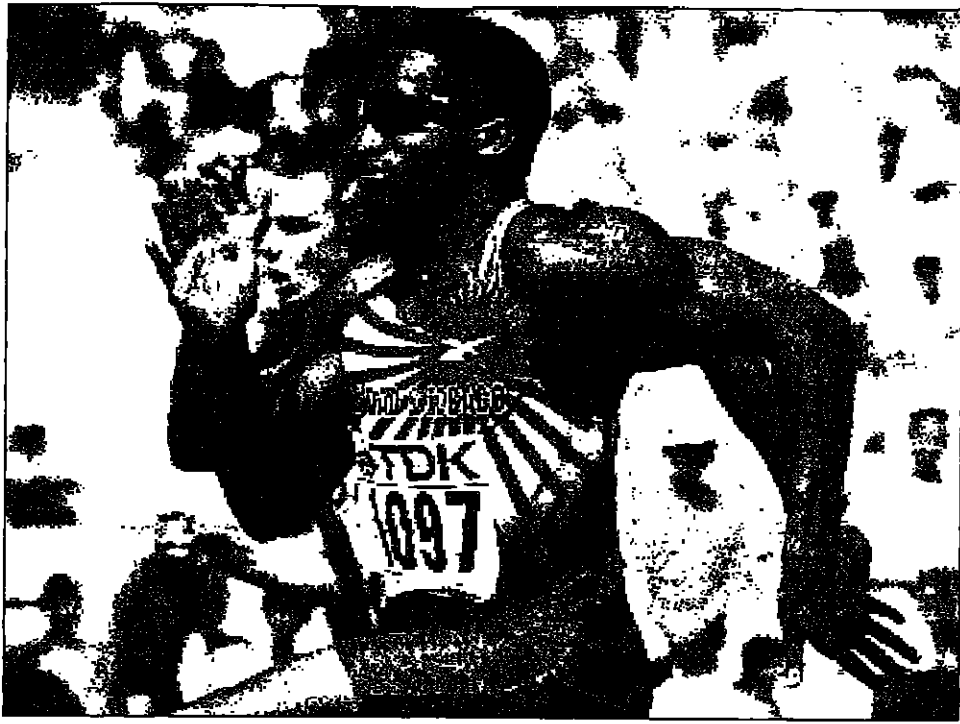
• ATHLETICS

World Championships
Men
100 — Maurice Greene, United States
200 — Ato Boldon, Trinidad And Tobago
400 — Michael Johnson, United States
800 — Wilson Kipketer, Denmark
1,500 — Hichel El Guerrouj, Morocco
3,000 Steeplechase — Wilson Boit Kipketer, Kenya
5,000 — Daniel Komen, Kenya
10,000 — Haile Gebrselassie, Ethiopia
Marathon — Abel Anton, Spain
110 Hurdles — Allen Johnson, United States
400 Hurdles — Stéphane Diagana, France
400 Relay — Canada
1,600 Relay — United States
20 — Kilometre Walk — Daniel Garcia, Mexico
High Jump — Javier Sotomayor, Cuba
Long Jump — Ivan Pedroso, Cuba
Triple Jump — Yoelvis Quesada, Cuba
Pole Vault — Sergei Bubka, Ukraine
Shot Put — John Godina, United States
Discus — Lars Riedel, Germany
Hammer Throw — Heinz Weis, Germany
Javelin — Marius Corbett, South Africa
Decathlon — Tomas Dvorak, Czech Republic

Women
100 — Marion Jones, United States
200 — Zhanna Pintushevich, Ukraine
400 — Cathy Freeman, Australia
800 — Ana Quirot, Cuba
1,500 — Carla Sacramento, Portugal
5,000 — Gabriela Szabo, Romania
10,000 — Sally Barsosio, Kenya
100 Hurdles — Ludmila Engquist, Sweden
400 Hurdles — Nezha Bidouane, Morocco
400 Relay — United States
1,600 Relay — Germany
10 — Kilometre Walk — Annarita Sidoti, Italy
High Jump — Hanne Haugland, Norway
Long Jump — Liudmila Galkina, Russia
Triple Jump — Sarka Kasparkova, Czech Republic
Shot Put — Astrid Kumbernuss, Germany
Discus — Beatrix Faumuina, New Zealand
Javelin — Trine Hattestad, Norway
Heptathlon — Sabine Braun, Germany

• AUTO RACING

Formula One — Jacques Villeneuve, Canada
Formula One Constructors — Williams
World Rally — Tommi Makinen, Finland
Cart — PPG — Alex Zanardi, Italy
Indy Racing League — Tony Stewart, United States
Indy Lights — PPG Cup — Tony Kanaan
Kool — Toyota Atlantic Series — Alex Barron
Exxon World Sports Car — Butch Leitzinger
Race Winners



Ato Boldon

Formula One
Australia — D. Coulthard
Brazil — J. Villeneuve
Argentina — J. Villeneuve
San Marino — Heinz-Harald Frentzen
Monaco — M. Schumacher
Spain — Jacques Villeneuve
Canada — M. Schumacher
France — M. Schumacher
Britain — J. Villeneuve
Germany — Gerhard Berger
Hungary — J. Villeneuve
Belgium — M. Schumacher
Italy — David Coulthard
Austria — J. Villeneuve
Luxembourg — J. Villeneuve
Japan — M. Schumacher
European — Mika Hakkinen
Indy — Car
Indycarnival — Scott Pruett
Rio 400 — Paul Tracy
U.S. 500 — Alex Zanardi
Molson Indy Vancouver — Mauricio Gugelmin
Blomberg 500 — M. Blundell
IRL
Indianapolis 500 — Arie Luyendyk

• BASEBALL

World Series — Florida Marlins
American League — Cleveland Indians
National League — Florida Marlins

• BASKETBALL

International Championships
World Under-22 — Australia
European — Yugoslavia
African — Senegal
Oceania — Australia
International Clubs
European Championship — Olympiakos (Greece)
European Cup — Real Madrid (Spain)
Latin America — Atenas De Cordoba (Argentina)
Korac Cup — Aris (Greece)
Ronchetti Cup — Csk Moscow (Russia)
McDonald's Championship — Chicago Bulls

• BOXING

Professional
IBF Heavyweight — Evander Holyfield, United States

WBA Heavyweight — Evander Holyfield, United States

WBC Heavyweight — Lennox Lewis, Britain

• CHESS

PCA — Garry Kasparov, Russia
FIDE — Anatoly Karpov, Russia

• CYCLING

Tour de France — Jan

Ullrich, Germany
Vuelta de Espana — Alex Zülle, Switzerland
Giro d'Italia — Ivan Gotti, Italy
Tour de Suisse — Christophe Agnolotto, France
Tour of Lombardy — Jalabert
Tour de Flandres — Rolf Sorensen, Denmark
Tour de Romandie — Pavel Tonkov, Russia
Corestates Championship — Massimiliano Lelli, Italy

• FENCING

World Championships
Men
Epee — Eric Srecki, France
Foil — Sergei Golubitsky, Ukraine
Sabre — Stanislaw Pozdniakov, Russia
Team Epee — Cuba
Team Foil — France
Team Sabre — France
Women
Epee — Miraide Garcia-Soto, Cuba
Foil — Giovanna Trillini, Italy
Team Epee — Hungary
Team Foil — Italy

• FIGURE SKATING

World Championships
Men — Elvis Stojko, Canada
Women — Tara Lipinski, Sugar Land, Texas
Pairs — Mandy Woetzel And Ingo Steuer, Germany
Dance — Oksana Gritshuk And Yevgeny Platov, Russia
European Championships
Men — Alexei Urmanov, Russia
Women — Irina Slutskaya, Russia
Pairs — Marina Yelstova And Andrei Bushkov, Russia
Dance — Oksana Gritshuk And Yevgeny Platov, Russia
U.S. Championships
Men — Todd Eldredge
Women — Tara Lipinski
Pairs — Ryoko Ina And Jason Dungjen
Dance — Elizabeth Punsalan and Jerod Swallow

• GOLF

Ryder Cup — Europe
Dunhill Cup — South Africa
World Matchplay — Vijay Singh
Majors
U.S. Masters — Tiger Woods, United States
British Open — Justin Leonard, United States
U.S. Open — Ernie Els, South Africa
PGA Championship — Davis Love III, United States
European PGA Tour
Volvo PGA Championship — Ian Woosnam
Volvo Masters — Lee Westwood, Benson

• HORSE RACING

International
Dubai World Cup — Singpiel
Cheltenham Gold Cup — Mr. Mulligan
English Derby — Benny The Dip
2,000 Guineas — Entrepreneur
Irish Derby — Desert King
Prix De Arc De Triomphe — Peintre Celebre
U.S. Thoroughbreds
Kentucky Derby — Silver Charm
Preakness — Silver Charm
Belmont Stakes — Touch Gold
Breeders Cup Sprint — Elmhurst
Breeders Cup Juvenile — Fillies — Countess Diana
Breeders Cup Distaff — Ajina
Breeders Cup Mile — Spinning World
Breeders Cup Juvenile — Favorite Trick
Breeders Cup Turf — Chief Beartart
Breeders Cup Classic — Skip Away

• JUDO

World Championships
Men
Over 95 Kg — David Douillet, France
95 — Pavel Nastula, Poland
86 — Ki — Young Jeon, South Korea
78 — In — Chol Cho, South Korea
71 — Kenzo Nakamura, Japan
65 — Kim Hyuk, South Korea
60 — Tadahiro Nomura, Japan
Open — Rafal Kubacki,



Pete Sampras

Poland
Women
Over 72 — Christine Cicot, France
72 — Noriko Anno, Japan
66 — Kate Howey, Britain
61 — Severine Vandenhende, France
56 — Isabel Fernandez, Spain
52 — Marie Claire Restoux, France
48 — Ryoko Tamura, Japan
Open — Dana Beltran, Cuba

• SKIING

Combined Nations Cup — Austria
Men
Overall — Luc Alphand, France
Downhill — Alphand
Slalom — Thomas Sykora, Austria
Giant Slalom — Michael Von Gruenigen, Switzerland
Super-G — Alphand
Nations Cup — Austria
Women
Overall — Pernilla Wiberg, Sweden
Downhill — Renate Goetschl, Austria
Slalom — Wiberg
Giant Slalom — Deborah Compagnoni, Italy
Super-G — Hilde Gerg, Germany
Nations Cup — Germany

• SOCCER

Nations
FIFA Confederations Cup — Brazil
FIFA World Youth Championship (Under-20) — Argentina
FIFA Under-17 Championship — Brazil
Copa America — Brazil
Caribbean Cup — Trinidad And Tobago
South East Asia Games — Thailand
International Clubs
Intercontinental Cup — Borussia Dortmund (Germany)
European Cup — Borussia Dortmund (Germany)
Cup Winners Cup — Barcelona (Barcelona)
UEFA Cup — Schalke (Germany)
European Super Cup — Juventus of Turin (Italy)
Copa Libertadores — Cruzeiro (Brazil)
South American Super Cup — River Plate (Argentina)
Conebol Cup — Atletico Mineiro (Brazil)
African Champions Cup — Raja Casablanca (Morocco)
African Cup Winners Cup — Etoile Du Sahel (Tunisia)
Asian Champions Cup — Pohang Steelers (South Korea)
Asian Cup Winners Cup — Al Hilal (Saudi Arabia)
Asian Super Cup — Al Hilal (Saudi Arabia)
CONCACAF Champions Cup — Cruz Azul (Mexico)
Exhibitions
Dunill Cup — China
Kirin Cup — Japan
Thailand King's Cup — Sweden
Tornio De France — England
U.S. Cup '97 — Mexico
European Clubs
Austrian League — Salzburg
Austrian Cup — Strum Graz
Belgian League — Lierse
Belgian Cup — Ekeren
Bulgarian League — CSKA Sofia
Bulgarian Cup — CSKA Sofia
Croatian League — Croatia Zagreb
Croatian Cup — Croatia Zagreb
Czech League — Sparta Prague
Czech Cup — Slavia Prague
Danish League — Brondby
Danish Cup — FC Copenhagen
English League — Manchester United
English FA Cup — Chelsea
English League Cup — Leicester
French League — AS Monaco
French Cup — Nice
German Bundesliga — Bayern Munich
German Cup — Stuttgart
Greek League — Olympiakos
Greek Cup — Aek Athens
Hungarian League — MTK Budapest
Irish League — Derry City
Irish Cup — Shelbourne
Italian League — Juventus
Italian Cup — Vicenza
Netherlands League — PSV Eindhoven
Netherlands Cup — Roda
Northern Ireland League — Crusaders
Glenavon
Polish League — Widzew Lodz
Polish Cup — Legia Warsaw
Portuguese League — FC Porto
Portuguese Cup — Boavista
Romanian League — Steaua Bucharest
Romanian Cup — Steaua Bucharest
Russian League — Spartak Moscow
Russian Cup — Lokomotiv Moscow
Scottish League — Rangers
Scottish FA Cup — Kilmarnock
Slovakian League — FC Kosice
Slovakian Cup — Slovan Bratislava
Spanish League — Real Madrid
Spanish Cup — Barcelona
Swedish League — Halmstad
Swedish Cup — Aik Solna
Swiss League — Sion
Swiss Cup — Sion
Turkish League — Galatasaray
Turkish Cup — Kocaelispor
Yugoslavian League — Partizan Belgrade
Yugoslav Cup — Red Star Belgrade
South American Clubs
Argentina — River Plate
Bolivia — Bolivar
Brazil — Vasco Da Gama
Chile — Colo Colo
Colombia — America De Cali
Ecuador — El Nacional
Paraguay — Olimpia
Peru — Alianza Lima
Uruguay — Penarol
Venezuela — Caracas Fc
CONCACAF Clubs
Mexico — Chivas De Guadalajara
Major League Soccer —

Korea)
Asian Cup Winners Cup — Al Hilal (Saudi Arabia)
Asian Super Cup — Al Hilal (Saudi Arabia)
CONCACAF Champions Cup — Cruz Azul (Mexico)

D.C. United
U.S. Open Cup — Dallas Burn

• TABLE TENNIS

World Championships
Men
Singles — Jan-Ove Waldner, Sweden
Doubles — Kong Linghui And Liu Guoliang, China
Team — China
Women
Singles — Deng Yaping, China
Doubles — Deng And Yang Ying, China
Team — China

Republic

ITF
Grand Slam Cup — Pete Sampras, United States
Davis Cup — Sweden
Fed Cup — France

ATP Tour
Newsweek Champions Cup — Michael Chang, United States
Lipton Championships — Thomas Muster, Austria
Monte Carlo Open — Marcelo Rios, Chile
German Open — Andrei Medvedev, Ukraine
Italian Open — Alex Corretja, Spain
Du Maurier Open — Chris



Martina Hingis

Woodruff, United States
ATP Championship — Pete Sampras, United States
Eurocard Open — Petr Korda, Czech Republic
Open De La Ville De Paris — Pete Sampras, United States
World Championship — Pete Sampras, United States
World Doubles — Todd Woodbridge And Mark Woodforde, Australia
Championship — Rick Leach And Jonathan Stark, United States
World Team Championship — Spain

• TENNIS

Grand Slams
Australian Open — Pete Sampras, United States
Men
Singles — Pete Sampras, United States
Doubles — Todd Woodbridge And Mark Woodforde, Australia
Women
Singles — Martina Hingis, Switzerland
Doubles — Hingis And Natasha Zvereva, Belarus
Other
French Open
Men
Singles — Gustavo Kuerten, Brazil
Doubles — Yevgeny Kafelnikov, Russia, And Daniel Vacek, Czech Republic
Women
Singles — Iva Majoli, Croatia
Doubles — Gigi Fernandez, United States, And Natasha Zvereva, Belarus

Wimbledon
Men
Singles — Pete Sampras, United States
Doubles — Todd Woodbridge And Mark Woodforde, Australia
Women
Singles — Martina Hingis, Switzerland
Doubles — Gigi Fernandez, United States, And Natasha Zvereva, Belarus

U.S. Open
Men
Singles — Patrick Rafter, Australia
Doubles — Yevgeny Kafelnikov, Russia, And Daniel Vacek, Czech Republic
Women
Singles — Martina Hingis, Switzerland
Doubles — Lindsay Davenport, United States, And Jana Novotna, Czech Republic

• VOLLEYBALL

Men
World League — Italy
Grand Champions Cup — Brazil
Women
Grand Prix — Russia
Grand Champions Cup — Russia
Beach Volleyball
Men
FIVB World Championship — Para And Guilherme, Brazil
AVP Tour Championship — Jose Loiola, Brazil, And Kent Steffes, United States
Women
FIVB World Championship — Sandra Pires And Jackie Silva, Brazil
WPVA Tour — Lisa Ann and Holly McPeak, U.S.

TODAY AT

CINEMA TEL: 634144

PHILADELPHIA "1"

George Clooney & Nicole Kidman ... in
THE PEACEMAKER
Shows: 12:15, 2:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 634144

PHILADELPHIA "2"

Mickey Rourke & Angie Everhart ... in
ANOTHER 9-1/2 WEEKS
Shows: 12:15, 2:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 699236

PLAZA

Nicholas Cage ... in
CON AIR
Shows: 12:30, 6:30
AL MASEER (Arabic)
Nour Al Sharif
Shows: 8:30, 10:45
HERCULES
Shows: 2:00 p.m.

CINEMA TEL: 677420

CONCORD

CONCORD "1"
MR. BEAN
Shows: 12:15, 2:15
MURDER 1600
Shows: 6:30, 8:30, 10:30
CONCORD "2"
MR. BEAN
Shows: 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 079 33430

GALLERIA 1

Demi Moore...in
THE JUROR
Shows: 8:30, 10:30 p.m.
GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE
Shows: 2 p.m., 6:30 p.m.

CINEMA TEL: 079 33430

GALLERIA 2

The Renowned Star
Harrison Ford...in
AIR FORCE ONE
Shows: 2 p.m., 6:15 p.m., 8:30 p.m., 10:45 p.m.

CINEMA TEL: 625155

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Jordan scores 41 points as Bulls beat Mavs

CHICAGO (AP) — Michael Jordan scored 41 points for his National Basketball Association record-tying 787th consecutive double-digit scoring game and Dennis Rodman foiled Don Nelson's intentional fouling strategy as the Chicago Bulls defeated Dallas 111-105 Monday night.

Rodman just missed a triple-double, getting 27 rebounds, 11 points and eight assists, as Chicago stretched its winning streak to eight games and extended the Mavericks' losing streak to 12.

Jordan's second straight 40-plus-point game enabled him to match Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's string of double-figure performances.

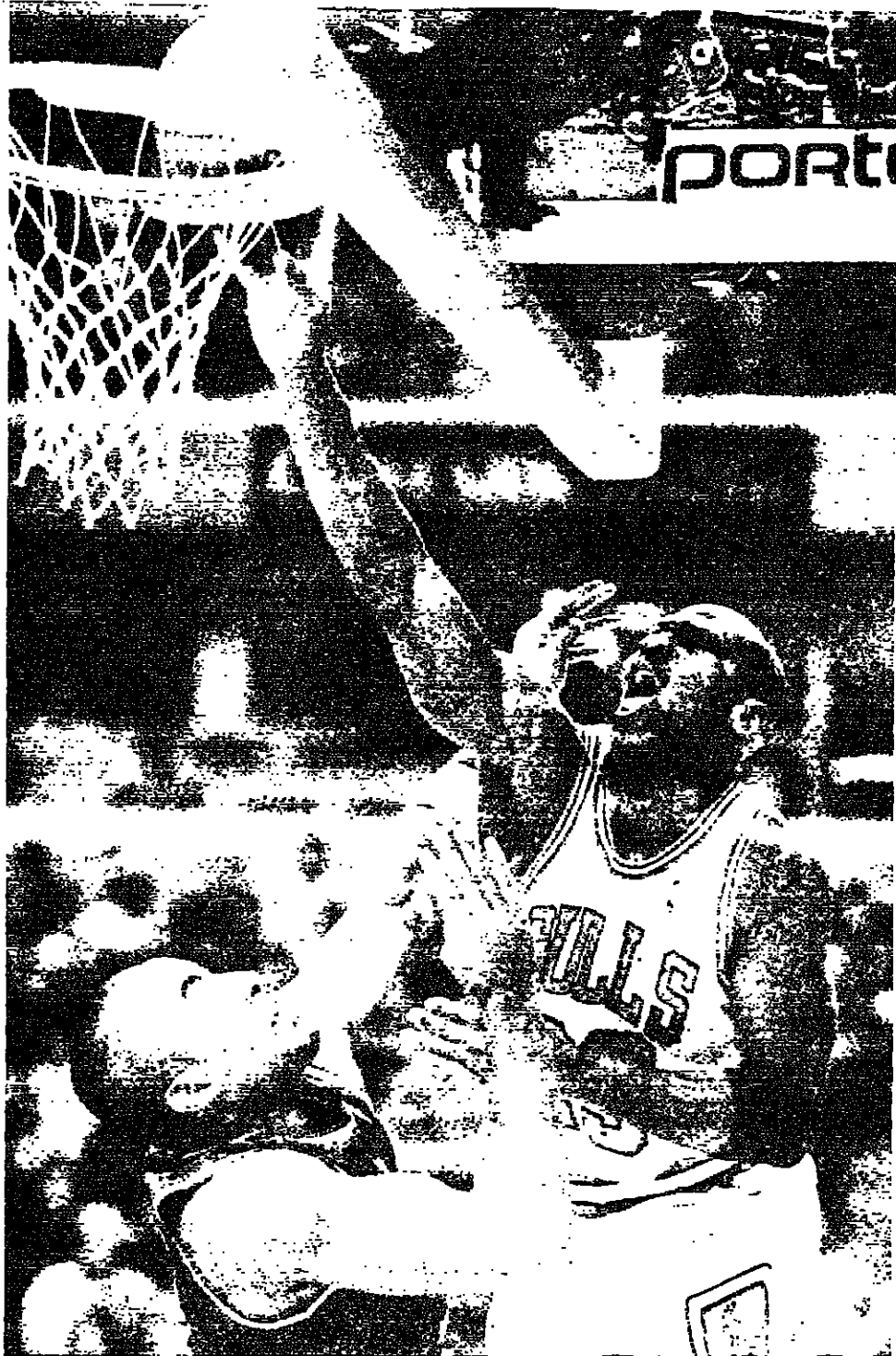
Rodman got his season-high point total and matched his career highs in throws attempted (12) made (nine).

Charlotte Hornets 120, Houston Rockets 101: At Houston, David Wesley scored 21 of his season-high 32 points in the first quarter, leading a barrage of 3-point shooting as Charlotte ended its three-game road losing streak.

The Hornets, second in the NBA in 3-point shooting at 37 per cent, connected on 12 of 18 from behind the arc and shot 60 per cent overall.

Del Curry came off the bench to add 23 points, going 6-of-8 from 3-point range, while Anthony Mason had 20.

Clyde Drexler and Kevin



Chicago Bulls' guard Michael Jordan (R) goes to the basket in front of Dallas Mavericks' forward Dennis Scott (L) in the first quarter in Chicago (Reuters photo)

Willis topped Houston with 18 points apiece and Charles Barkley had 12 rebounds.

New Jersey Nets 99, Washington Wizards 91: East Rutherford, New Jersey, rookie Keith Van Horn had a career-high 32 points

and 10 rebounds and new jersey avenged its worst loss of the season.

Jayson Williams added 19 points and 22 rebounds as the Nets prevailed despite making just two field goals in the fourth quarter.

Chris Webber had 22

points for Washington before fouling out with 4:19 to play.

Sam Cassell added 19 points for New Jersey before fouling out and Gill had 12. Van Horn shot 10-of-19 from the field and 10-for-10 from the line.

Competition heats up at both ends of Premier League table

Wihdat face Hussein Friday; Ramtha take on Faisali

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A crucial week awaits the Kingdom's soccer teams as they enter the final two weeks of the Premier League Championship.

Al Wihdat still have a slim three point lead and will be aiming to score a win against Al Hussein Friday to secure the title for the second consecutive year.

The titleholders will guarantee the crown from a win and a draw in their remaining two matches, the last being against lowly Al Karmel.

Closest rivals Al Faisali take on Al Ramtha Thursday hoping that Al Wihdat foul up allowing them to take the title they last won in 1995.

STANDINGS

Team	P	W	D	L	Gf	Ga	Pts
Wihdat	16	14	1	1	33	5	43
Faisali	16	13	1	2	49	12	40
Ramtha	16	7	5	4	26	19	26
Hussein	16	7	3	6	28	25	24
Ahli	16	6	4	6	29	30	22
Jazireh	16	6	2	8	20	25	20
Qadisiyah	16	5	3	8	16	22	18
S.Hussein16	4	3	9	19	28	15	
Baqaa	16	3	2	11	14	34	11
Karmel	16	2	2	12	14	48	8

Al Ramtha have been held to disappointing results in the past two weeks, losing 2-1 to Al Ahli and drawing 1-1 with Al Baqaa.

Al Ahli, who have moved to fifth after two consecutive wins, will play Al Jazireh Friday as both teams struggle for an advanced halfway standing.

Al Ahli beat Al Hussein 2-1 in their postponed match Monday and had earlier beat Al Ramtha.

In another kind of struggle at the bottom end of the table, Shabab Al Hussein play Al Karmel hoping to score a win in order to move away from the relegation-threatened last two positions.

Al Karmel have already

been relegated with a mere eight points in the overall standings.

Al Baqaa also have a crucial match against Al Qadisiyah Thursday. The former will be hoping that they come out victorious while Shabab Al Hussein lose in order to have a chance to stay among the prestigious group for another year.

Al Wihdat are hoping to win the second title of the year after winning the Cup Winners Cup at the onset of the season. Al Faisali won the Federation Shield.

The fourth title of the year — the Jordan Cup — will see Al Ramtha who knocked out Al Faisali playing the winner of Al Hussein-Al Wihdat semi-final which will be played Jan. 16.

Graf pulls out of Australian Open

MUNICH (AFP) — Former women's tennis No. 1 Steffi Graf will not play in the Australian Open, which begins on January 19, it was announced here on Monday.

The 28-year-old Graf, four times a winner of the Australian Open, has not played since she was beaten by South African Amanda Coetzee in the French Open quarter-finals last June — she later underwent an operation on her left knee.

"I have decided not to compete in Australia because after such a long absence I do not feel in good enough form to do

myself justice," she said in a statement read out by her manager Hans Engert.

Graf, who also said that the extreme heat of the Australian summer would be a hindrance in her return to competition, added that her knee was absolutely fine and stated her ambition to regain the world number one spot off Swiss teenage prodigy Martina Hingis.

Graf aims to return for the Tokyo WTA tournament which begins on February 2.

Philippoussis out

In Adelaide, Australian

power server Mark Philippoussis announced his withdrawal from next week's Australian men's hardcourt tennis tournament here with a shoulder injury.

The injury had been troubling Philippoussis for several weeks and organisers said it was decided he needed a rest before preparing for the Australian Open, starting in Melbourne on January 19.

The injury has sidelined "Scud" for the past two months and he will only compete in the Kooyong Classic in Melbourne (January 14-17) before the Aus-

tralian Open.

The hardcourt tournament will be contested by World No. 4 Jonas Bjorkman of Sweden, former World No. 1 Jim Courier and former Wimbledon and Australian Open champion Andre Agassi.

Agassi, who sought a wild card to play here, has chosen the hardcourt tournament to launch his comeback to top flight tennis after a horror 1997 during which he did not win a major tournament and fell to as low as 140 on the world rankings.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Uruguayan football legend dies

MONTEVIDEO (AFP) — Uruguayan footballing legend William Martinez has died aged 69 his family announced on Monday. Martinez, who played for the national side over 15 years, achieved his greatest moment when he was part of the Uruguay team who won the 1950 World Cup. A robust central defender he won two Copa Libertadores during his club career with Rampla Juniors and Penarol.

Redondo holds out despite regrets

MADRID (AFP) — Real Madrid's Argentinian playmaker Fernando Redondo said here on Monday that he would not follow national coach Daniel Passarella's instructions to cut his hair despite the fact that failure to do so would rule him out of the 1998 World Cup finals. The 28-year-old Redondo, who played a leading role alongside Inter Milan's Diego Simeone in Argentina's 1994 World Cup side that eventually went 3-2 to Romania in the last 16, said he may come to regret his stubbornness in years to come. "Perhaps in five or 10 years I will regret this but there are certain things that I will not compromise and this is one of them," Redondo said. Redondo, who joined Real Madrid from Tenerife after the 1994 World Cup finals, fell out with Passarella, who led Argentina to the 1978 World Cup title as a player, after the disciplinary coach said that all his squad should have short hair — leading scorer Gabriel Batistuta also refused but has since been recalled. "I did think about it again but I still came to the same conclusion and it looks like I will be watching the World Cup from my armchair," Redondo said.

Gascoigne set for Old Firm return

GLASGOW (AFP) — Paul Gascoigne confirmed his readiness for an Old Firm return by starting in a closed-door friendly against Raith Rovers on Monday night. The England midfielder, sporting a new goatee beard, played for 70 minutes and scored a superb individual goal in Rangers' 3-1 win ahead of their Parkhead clash with Celtic on Friday. Gascoigne has been suspended for the Ibrox side's last four matches after being sent off in the last Old Firm encounter on November 19. Swedish midfielder Jonas Thern also played for 70 minutes after his recent absence due to a family illness, while Andy Goram and Ally McCoist appeared for the full 90 minutes. McCoist, likely to leave Ibrox on a three-month loan deal early in the New Year, notched the other two goals from the penalty spot.

Ferdinand signs 7-year contract

LONDON (AFP) — Rio Ferdinand has signed a new seven-year contract with West Ham, tying him to the club until 2005. The 19-year-old England international had been linked with a move to Manchester United, but the Hammers have moved to ensure they are in control of his future. West Ham chief executive Peter Storie said: "We are absolutely delighted to conclude the contract with Rio. We had given him our word that if he made the full England squad we would renegotiate his contract, and as part of those negotiations Rio has agreed to extend his contract by a further three years." Storie added: "This shows the base which West Ham United are now building for the future when players of Rio's quality will commit themselves for such a period."

Davies dents Chelsea title hopes

LONDON (AFP) — England Under-21 international Kevin Davies

11th goal of the season gave Southampton a 1-0 win over Chelsea on Monday boosting his side's chances of survival while delivering a serious dent to the London side's hopes of capturing the Premiership title.

Davies' goal lifted Southampton to 13th and extended their unbeaten run to four matches while Chelsea, who failed to take advantage of Manchester United's 3-2 defeat at Coventry on Sunday, remain third seven points adrift of United.

Chelsea coach Ruud Gullit said his side, who only claimed a point from a possible six over the holiday break against lower table sides, had committed suicide in the way they played in the first-half.

"It was plain silly the way we played in the first-half. We can say that the chances didn't go in in the second-half but in the first-half we committed suicide," Gullit said.

"From that showing and the 1-1 draw with Wimbledon on Friday it would be pushing it to say that we were title contenders," he added.

Davies, who was signed after inspiring Second Division Chesterfield to the FA Cup semi-finals last season, slotted home a right footed shot from Carlton Palmer's excellent pass from the by-line — though the former England international looked offside when he received the ball from Jason Dodd.

Chelsea's best effort came from veteran Welsh international Mark Hughes who saw his shot blocked on the line by Oakley.

Brazilian coach pessimistic about defending title in Europe

RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP) — Brazil's coach Mario Zagallo said here on Monday that he was not confident of defending their World Cup title next year in France because World Cup finals in Europe were "always very difficult."

The 69-year-old Zagallo, who has won four World Cups either as a player or in a coaching capacity with Brazil, said that playing in a European climate was far more difficult for South American teams despite the fact Brazil won the 1958 World Cup in Sweden.

"The Europeans will do anything to stop us from winning our fifth title,"

Zagallo said.

Although Zagallo, who coached Brazil to the 1970 title and was a technical advisor when they won in 1994, said that only Argentina and his team of the five South American sides had a chance of winning the title and that there were five European teams who had a real chance.

Zagallo, who played in the World Cup winning sides of 1958 and 1962, said that he feared England, Germany, Italy, France and Spain, adding that the African sides were too unpredictable for him to pass judgement on.

"You never know how they are going to play from one day to the next. If they are on their game like Nigeria were in the Olympic semi-final (the Africans beat Brazil 4-3) then they can beat any-

body but in general they are not consistent enough," Zagallo said.

Brazil, who have been drawn in Group A with Morocco, Scotland and Norway, are heavy

favourites to lift the trophy for the fifth time after winning the Copa America and the Federations Cup in Saudi Arabia this year.

National Project Coordinator

We are launching an innovative project in the field of micro-enterprise development and training. The objective of this project is to generate employment in handicrafts through the development of adequate training mechanisms and business support services, among which the establishment of a business incubator. This project will combine direct support to micro enterprises, institutional development and policy advice.

we are looking for a motivated project coordinator who will ensure the overall management and coordination of the project. The coordinator will carry out project planning and implementation as well as a number of specific tasks such as undertaking needs assessments, identifying opportunities, undertaking market research and feasibility studies, defining and implementing a strategy for the establishment of a business incubator, promoting cost-effective services to the artisans and evaluating their impact, preparing progress reports, etc..

Qualifications required

- A university degree in business administration, economics, marketing, engineering, or related disciplines.
- A minimum of eight years of experience in the private sector in the field of small enterprise development or the promotion of craft development activities, with proven skills in small business consultancy and training, and managerial experience.
- Excellent managerial, organizational and administrative skills.
- Strong analytical and conceptual skills with an ability to address both macro and micro issues and apply these skills in the day to day implementation of the project.
- Capacity to develop feasibility studies, sectoral studies and business opportunity identification plans.
- Ability to adjust to changing market conditions.
- Ability to foster partnership and support.
- Effective verbal and written communication and negotiation skills.
- Experience at developing and maintaining relationships at all levels.
- Proficiency in written and spoken English and Arabic.
- Excellent computer skills with experience of software packages related to business administration and planning.

Starting date: the appointment will commence as soon as possible, after the satisfactory outcome of post-interview enquiries.

Applications for this post are sought from both men and women.

Applications in English with detailed curriculum vitae showing positions held and current salary should be submitted to P. O. Box 35286, stating Ref. NATCOORD clearly on your envelope.

Closing date for receipt of completed applications is 15 January 1998.

Only shortlisted applicants will be contacted.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAN HIRSH

HAND OF THE YEAR

North-South vulnerable East deals.			
NORTH		EAST	
♠ 10 7 6		♠ 8 8	
♥ A K Q J 5		♥ 7 4 3	
♦ Q 8 3		♦ A 10 8 7 4 2	
♣ 10 7		♣ 8 4	
WEST		NORTH	
♠ A K 9 6		♠ 10 7 5	
♥ 10 8 6 2		♥ Q 6	
♦ J 5		♦ 10 7	
♣ Q 5 2		WEST	
SOUTH		EAST	
♠ Q J 4 2		♠ 8 3	
♥ 9		♥ A 10 9	
♦ K 8		♦ 8 4	
♣ A K J 9 6 3		SOUTH	
♠ Q J 4 2		♠ Q J 4	
♥ 9		♥ K	
♦ K 8		♦ A K J	
♣ A K J 9 6 3			

Opening lead: Jack of ♠

Every year the International Bridge Press Association gives an award for the best-played hand of the year. This year they might not have to look any further than this one, from the finals of the Vanderbilt Team of Four at the recent Spring North American Championships in Philadelphia.

Sitting South for the eventual winners was Michael Rosenberg of Manhattan. If the clubs were going to run, there were tricks galore to be had, so Rosenberg decided to try to make nine tricks in the event that the enemy had a stopper in the suit.

The first move was to allow the jack of diamonds to hold the first trick. Had West continued with a diamond, declarer would have had to assume that East did not have a

When declarer led a spade to the queen, West was trapped. If West continued with a high spade, declarer would unblock the queen, and could not be stopped from scoring a spade, two clubs and, after forcing out the ace, the queen of diamonds. If West craved with a diamond, East would win and have to return a black card. If it was a spade, declarer would insert the jack. If a club, declarer would win and lead the king of spades. In either event, nine tricks would be there on an onplay.

Instead, West chose to exit with the nine of spades. Declarer won and led the king of diamonds, taken by the ace. On the club return declarer took the king, then threw West in with a spade for a forced return of a club into South's A ♠ tenace.

LOS ANGELES (APF) — Former "Baywatch" star Pamela Anderson Lee gave birth at her Malibu home to her second child Monday, her publicist said. Dylan Suggs Lee weighed in at 3.1 kilos, Pamela Anderson Lee and her husband, rocker Tommy Lee, have another son, 18-month-old Brandon. "Pamela is resting comfortably at home with Tommy Lee and her children," said publicist Marleah Leslie. "She and Tommy are thrilled over the birth of Dylan."